

Hafa Adai!

'Marianas included in half-billion COVID-19 home test kits' **PAGE 2**
Chalan Kiya sewer project to be done by end of February. **PAGE 3**

\$1

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AT A GLANCE

As of 5:04pm, Jan. 18, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population
Fully Vaccinated: **98%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,291
Fully Vaccinated:	35,989
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,309
Fully Vaccinated:	5,124
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,118

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	23,581	637	23,581
Recovered	19,411	0	19,411
Active	3,896	637	3,896
Deaths	274	0	274

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	3,946	25	3,971
Traced via Travel Screening	432	10	442
Traced via Community Screening	3,514	15	3,529
Deaths	21	0	21

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

25 new COVID cases in NMI

The number of COVID-19 cases in the CNMI has now climbed to a total of 3,971 with the addition of 25 more people who have been confirmed positive for COVID-19.

Of the 25 cases identified on Jan. 16, three were identified via contact tracing, 12 via community testing, and 10 via travel testing. The vaccination statuses of the 25 cases are pending

verification.

The Communicable Disease Investigation/Inspection team of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts

of the newly confirmed cases, and this effort will continue until all probable cases are

identified and tested.

The case total represents all positive cases of COVID-19

in the CNMI, counting from March 26, 2020, when the

See 25 on **Page 4**

Over \$400K in incentives OK'd for TRIP extension

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Finance has approved the appropriation of over \$400,000 to the Marianas Visitors Authority that will go toward in-

centives for tourists under the TRIP program that has now been extended to February.

During an MVA board meeting yesterday, MVA board chair Viola Alepuyo announced that Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig has

confirmed the allocation of \$475,000 to MVA that will go toward travel bucks and polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, tests to further entice tourists to come to Saipan in an attempt to sustain the revival of its tourism sector.

However, in order for tourists to avail of these incentives funded through local funds, interested passengers must book their trip to Saipan in groups as this is strictly available only as part of a group package.

Currently, the CNMI's travel bucks incentive remains

See **OVER** on **Page 4**



NMC-DPW INK AGREEMENT

Northern Marianas College president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, right, signs a memorandum of agreement with Department of Public Works Secretary James Ada to establish the On The Job Training and Social Support program in the CNMI. The program, which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration, is designed to prepare women, minorities, and other disadvantaged individuals for entry into highway construction careers within the CNMI, specifically for the fields of pre-engineering programs administered through NMC. DPW will provide a \$2,100 stipend to students who enroll in the program.

NMC

Volcanic ash delays aid to Tonga as scale of damage emerges

By **NICK PERRY**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Thick ash on an airport runway was delaying aid deliveries to the Pacific island nation of Tonga, where significant damage was being reported days after a huge undersea volcanic eruption and tsunami.

See story on **Page 13**

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: [vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/](https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/)

INSIDE



LOCAL

Thick ash on an airport runway was delaying aid deliveries to the Pacific island nation of Tonga.

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GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

It's that time of the year when homeowners are thinking of renovating. Here are some suggestions.

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LIFE & STYLE

Sotheby's Dubai has unveiled a diamond that's from out of this world—a 555.55-carat black diamond.

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Local

'Marianas included in half-billion COVID-19 home test kits'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Marianas households are included in the half-billion COVID-19 home test kits that will be made available for free to American households and they can order these kits online for home delivery, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) over the weekend.

Sablan also disclosed in his e-kilili newsletter that the White House announced last Wednesday that it will increase the number of COVID-19 testing in schools to help K-12 schools remain open full-time and in-person.

He said the administration



Sablan

of President Joe Biden announced the free tests over the weekend and that his office confirmed with the White House that Marianas households are covered in this nationwide response to COVID-19.

Beginning today, Wednesday, Americans will be able to

order rapid COVID-19 home test kits at COVIDTests.gov. Sablan said the kits will be shipped within 7-12 days of ordering.

Initially, four tests will be allowed per residential address without charge for the kits or the shipping, he said.

Sablan said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend at-home tests for persons who begin to have

symptoms, who have come into close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or who are gathering indoors with people who are unvaccinated.

As for the COVID-19 tests for K-12 schools, Sablan said there will be 5 million free rapid tests per month, 5 million free Polymerase Chain Reaction, or PCR, tests per month, new federal testing

sites in underserved communities, increased coordination with school districts and test providers, and new training and materials for in-classroom testing programs.

He said schools, child care centers and other facilities may enroll to access testing resources at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/operation-expanded-testing.html>.

Man denied clemency moves to revive suit vs DOC

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

A man who was recently denied clemency by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is now asking the court to reopen court proceedings in his lawsuit against the Department of Corrections.

Price Shoiter, though his lawyer, Michael Dotts, recently filed a motion asking the U.S. District Court for the NMI to enforce the parties' previous settlement agreement or to vacate the dismissal order, which would reopen the proceedings in his case against DOC.

Dotts said that, pursuant to the agreement, in the event that clemency is denied by the governor, the case would be put back on the trial calendar.

"It is unfortunate that the governor denied clemency but that is the right of the governor. It should be noted that both the Board of Parole and the attorney general recommended clemency. But the situation is there was a failure of consideration for the settlement when the governor denied clemency. The parties had anticipated that this could happen. In case it did, they provided in

their agreement the remedy of placing the case back on the trial calendar. The court retained jurisdiction so it could enforce the settlement agreement that included this remedy," Dotts said.

With Torres denying clemency for Shoiter, the settlement agreement has become null and void, Dotts said, and Shoiter wants to pursue his previous lawsuit against the department and its former and current officials for allegedly denying him adequate medical care.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com



NEW MVA BOARD MEMBER

The Marianas Visitors Authority's newest board member, PMT general manager Masaru Sunaga, right, takes the oath of office administered by board chairwoman Viola Alepuyo in Dec. 27, 2021, at the MVA office in San Jose, Saipan. Sunaga fills the vacancy of recently retired Tasi Tours president Masato Tezuka and has 32 years experience working in the tourism industry, including supervisory and managerial positions at JTB Group. He is also president of Japan Saipan Travel Association and principal of the Japan Society School of Saipan.

MVA



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Fridays	ITALIAN
Saturdays	PACIFIC ISLAND

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House unanimously passes joint resolution for new local stimulus

The CNMI House of Representatives unanimously passed House Joint Resolution 22-12 on Jan. 12 to strongly encourage and endorse the issuance of a new local stimulus payment of \$500 per resident and \$500 per dependent.

Rep. Christina Sablan (D-Saipan), who chairs the Health and Welfare Committee, introduced the bipartisan House joint resolution, which followed the same eligibility guidelines as the previous federal stimulus packages for households that meet adjusted gross income guidelines of up to \$75,000 per individual or \$150,000 for married couples.

"This joint resolution is about putting money quickly and directly into the pockets of our people who need this relief the most, and giving them the freedom and flexibility to decide for themselves how they can use these funds to

meet their immediate needs," Sablan said. "It's also about recognizing the contributions of all front-liners in the public and private sectors who provided essential services throughout this pandemic, at great personal risk to themselves and their families."

The joint resolution strongly urges the new local economic impact payment to be made directly to qualified households instead of limiting spending options to local vendors that accepted Visa debit cards, as with the previous local stimulus distribution.

Sablan expressed her appreciation for the united, bipartisan support HJR 22-12 received in the House and for the work that landed the American Rescue Plan Act funding in the CNMI.

"I thank my colleagues in the House for their unanimous support of this initiative. Re-

Chalan Kiya sewer project to be done by end of Feb.

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**
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REPORTER

A Commonwealth Utilities Corp. sewer project in Chalan Kiya is scheduled to be completed by the end of February this year, according to CUC executive director Gary Camacho.

He said in an interview last week that the project was already nearing completion but it was determined during final inspections that "there were some deficiencies that the

regardless of party affiliation, my colleagues and I recognize that so many of our people need help, and they need it now," Sablan said. "I also thank Congressman Gregorio Kilili Sablan for his successful efforts in securing the funds in the American Rescue Plan Act to make this kind of economic relief possible for Marianas households." (PR)

contractor was required to go back and correct." Camacho said that CUC expected the deficiencies to be corrected by Jan. 17.

CUC projects the repaving of the road and completion of the project itself for the end of February, said Camacho.

He said he and CUC appreciate the community's patience in driving down As Terlaje Hill, as the construction work has created traffic congestion along the span of road near the Mobil gas station

in Chalan Kiya.

"It has created a congested area; however [the traffic redirections] are requirements to ensure safety for everybody," said Camacho.

Camacho thanked CUC's contractors and project engineer Nicolette Villagomez for working diligently to get the sewer project closer to completion.

"We're very happy that the contractors have been working through rain, heat, and everything else to be able to

move this project. ...[Villagomez] has done a wonderful job, considering all the different challenges along the way," said Camacho.

"We all are very proud of her and the engineering department and [are] happy with the

See **SEWER** on Next Page

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TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold its Regular meeting on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Conference Room.

AGENDA

- I. PRELIMINARY
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Adoption of Agenda
 - d. Adoption of Minutes
 1. November 9, 2021 – Regular Meeting
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS¹
- III. REPORTS
 - a. Chair's Report
 - b. Executive Director's Report
- IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - a. Casino Service Industry
 - 1) United States Playing Cards
 - 2) Matsui Asia, Limited
- V. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Status Update of Bridge Investment Group/Tinian Diamond Casino
- VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION²
- VII. OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS
- VIII. MISCELLANEOUS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
- IX. ADJOURNMENT

¹Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
²Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

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Meth den uncovered at local hotel

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, in collaboration with the NMI Drug Enforcement Task Force, uncovered a meth den at the Hyatt Regency Saipan after executing a search warrant for a room belonging to man believed to have been involved in selling methamphetamine.

Last week, over 1.6 lbs of methamphetamine was uncovered in two rooms at the Hyatt Regency Saipan that was being rented by Qui Shou, also known as Ike, for the past six months.

Qui was brought before U.S. District Court for the

NMI Magistrate Judge Heather Kennedy last Friday for his initial hearing. Qui was charged with one count of possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance (methamphetamine), and one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

The defendant was ordered to return to court today for a detention hearing at 9am and again on Jan. 27 at 1:30 pm for a preliminary hearing.

Aside from the large quantity of meth found in his room, the DEA also found two handguns with ammunition, a large amount of cash, over 4,000 small ziplock baggies, and a few glass pipes with residue

that tested positive for methamphetamine.

According to court documents, DEA special agent Kirk F. Johns said that a room on the sixth floor of Hyatt Regency Saipan had been under surveillance for the past few months before they executed the search warrant on Jan. 12, 2022.

On that day, Wang Juhua, later identified as Qui's companion, was seen coming out of the hotel room before heading to the front desk where she paid for another room on the third floor.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

Gas up another 15 cents in less than two weeks

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The CNMI saw its second fuel increase of 2022 less than two weeks since the last, with fuel prices up by another 15 cents.

Around 3:30pm yesterday afternoon, Mobil Oil Marianas led the way with a 15-cent increase.

Mobil's Extra fuel went up from \$ 4.96 a gallon to \$5.11. Mobil also hiked its Supreme fuel from \$5.41 to \$5.56 a gallon while its diesel increased

from \$5.23 a gallon to \$5.38.

Shell Marianas has yet to increase its prices as of 5pm press time but both oil companies typically mirror each other's price changes, so Shell is expected to impose the same increase today.

According to an 18-year-old motorist, he believes this is only the beginning and that fuel prices will only increase from here.

"I'm sure we'll see another increase before the month's end. Fuel prices are increasing

everywhere, not just here. It's going to get higher before we see another rollback," he said.

Another motorist, a 54-year-old male, said the year has just begun and the CNMI can't catch a break with these back-to-back increases.

"This is ridiculous. We can't catch a break. We're seeing gas increase every two weeks. That's insane. People are barely making it in this economy and gas is just continuously increasing? It's not right," he said.

SEWER

From Page 3

contractor for making the adjustments as needed along the way. But again, we're

trying to finish that up, get out of the way, and open up that [road] for everyone," he added.

The contractor for the project is RNV Construction.

According to a Sept. 3, 2020,

CUC press release, the purpose of the Chalan Kiya project is to "safely install a gravity sewer line from the W-6 Sewer Lift Station to the W-5 Sewer Lift Station in order to eliminate the W-6 Lift Station."

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From Page 1

CNMI first recorded its positive cases.

As of Jan. 17, 2022, there were nine individuals who have been hospitalized as a result of COVID-19, with five of them unvaccinated, four vaccinated; and one on a ventilator.

Of the total cases identified, there have already been 3,543 recoveries, 407 active cases, and 21 COVID-19-related deaths as of Jan. 16, 2022.

In terms of identification, 1,805 were identified via contact tracing; 1,724 via com-

munity testing; and 442 via travel testing.

In related news, a total of 149 COVID-19 vaccines were administered on Jan. 17, 2022, resulting in 97.9% of the CNMI's eligible population being fully vaccinated.

A total of 172 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Jan. 16, 2022: 114 community-based testing and 58 at the COVID-19 Community Center (referrals only)

The CHCC continues to encourage the community to get vaccinated if they have not done so, or get their booster shot if they are eligible to help

prevent severe illness, hospitalization, or death.

"Please seek care or test early if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, as you may be eligible for monoclonal antibodies or other new treatment that are given soon after infection," said CHCC in its latest news release. "Unvaccinated individuals are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19, and unvaccinated individuals spread the virus at a higher rate than vaccinated individuals, thereby increasing the spread and risk of serious illness toward other unvaccinated individuals." (*Saipan Tribune*)

OVER

From Page 1

at \$100 per passenger. In addition, the program will also provide free COVID-19 PCR tests for fully vaccinated tourists before their flights home.

In related news, the board has extended the TRIP program, or Tourism Resumption Incentive Program, to February since South Korean airlines that have been servicing the program, specifically Jeju

Airlines and T'Way Airlines, have suspended flights for the rest of January.

MVA managing director Priscilla Iakopo noted that Asiana has been the only carrier that has continued to accommodate the program with one flight a week, bringing in roughly 1,200 tourists in January.

The hope is that once February hits, the CNMI will see an influx of TRIP tourists with all three airlines expected to resume their regular

scheduled flights.

"For the month of January, since its only Asiana flying, they're overbooked and have already reached their 70% capacity. Moving on to February, we're expecting to have all the airlines back," Iakopo said.

In a previous article on *Saipan Tribune*, T'way Air decided earlier this month to suspend its two flights a week schedule until Jan. 28.

Since Jan. 12, Jeju air ceased its Busan-Saipan route.

AK Saipan Toyota unveils 2022 TOYOTA Corolla Cross LE

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**
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REPORTER

Blending together the best parts of Toyota's Corolla and RAV4 as well as coming equipped with Keyless Entry, Blind Spot Monitors, Qi wireless charging, and many other features, the 2022 Toyota Corolla Cross LE is AK Saipan Toyota's newest offering.

AK Saipan sales manager Kevin Barnes, who walked attendees through the car's features during an unveiling for the new model yesterday at its showroom in San Jose, said the Corolla Cross LE "checks a lot of boxes" and is especially fit for the CNMI's conditions. "It's a perfect blend of all of the reliability and efficiency of a Corolla, and the functionality of an SUV that we get out of a RAV4," he said.

The Corolla Cross LE offers a 2.0 liter four-cylinder engine that gives you an estimated 32 miles per gallon.

As for tech and features, Barnes first demonstrated how Keyless Entry worked. With the car keys on your person, for example in your pocket, grabbing the door handle will unlock the car. Once inside, you will find that the Corolla Cross LE comes equipped with push start and many of the best features found in the Toyota Corolla and RAV4.

Barnes said the car comes with roadside assistance on its dash, Blind Spot Monitors on both side mirrors, automatic high beams, and many other safety features to keep you driving safely. "All of these features combined allow you to keep your eyes facing forward and just focus on the driving while the car takes care of all the details for you," he said.

The Corolla Cross LE currently retails for \$30,999. But, Barnes said, with AK's friends and family discount, the car will be offered for \$29,999 for this first round of Corolla Cross LEs while supplies last.

In a brief interview with AK Guam and AK Saipan president Wendi Herring, she described the new Corolla Cross as a great in-between for those seeking the driving experience of a sedan and the sturdiness of an SUV. She added that she had an opportunity to drive the Corolla Cross in Guam.

"It's a fantastic car, I really like this new model [and I'm] glad we were able to get it from Toyota," she said.

Herring was "really pleased to be here" for the unveiling, and lauded Barnes for doing an "excellent job" of explaining the Corolla Cross LE's features and capabilities.



The 2022 Toyota Corolla Cross LE is AK Saipan Toyota's newest offering.

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*Terms and conditions will apply. 2022 EPA-estimated MPG ratings. Mileage may vary. Vehicle not exactly as shown.



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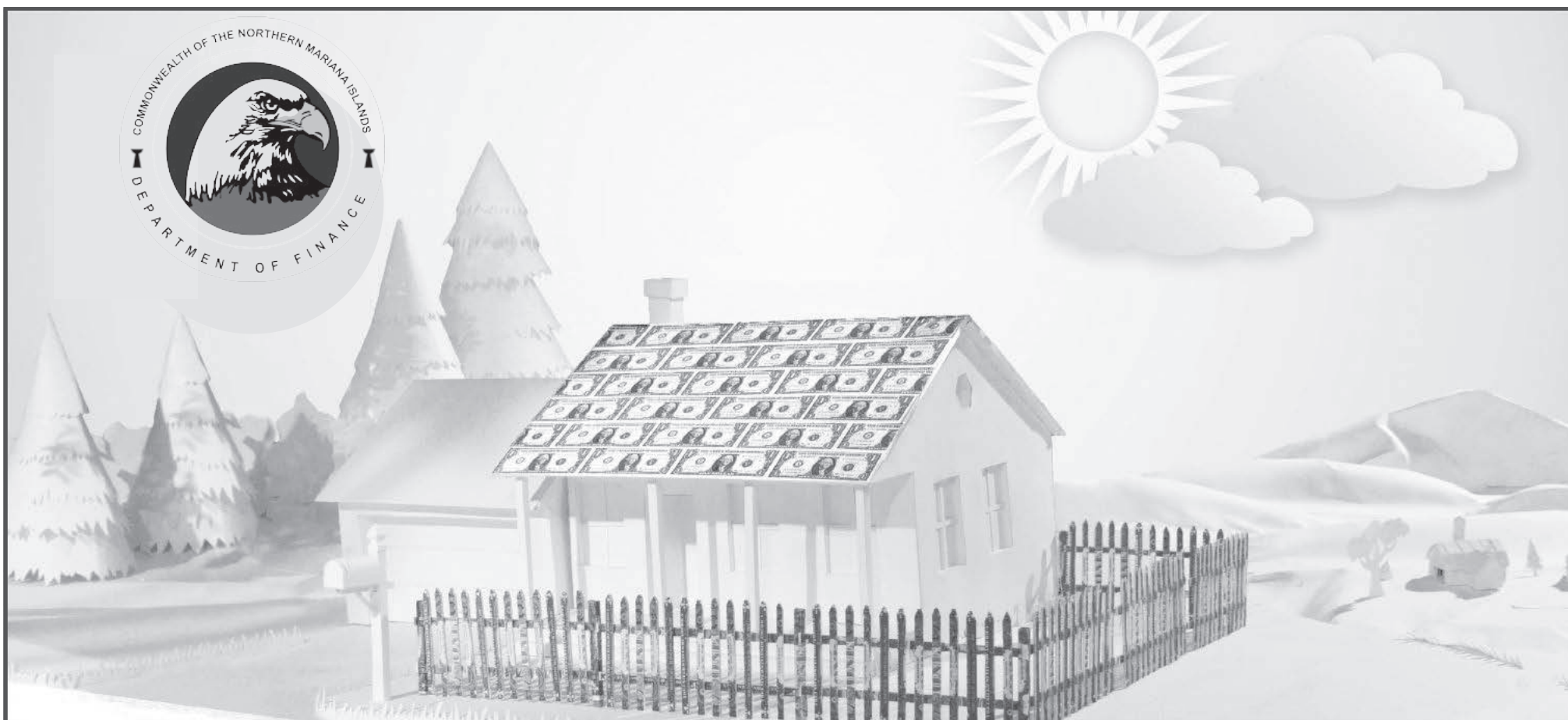
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Earned Income Tax Credit is for the people who work for someone else or own or run a business. To qualify, you must have low to mid income. If you qualify, you must file a tax return to get EITC even if you owe no tax and are not required to file. With EITC, you could pay less tax, pay no tax, or receive money back. The amount of EITC changes based on:

- if you are single or married and
- if you have no children or the number of children living with you.

All people eligible for EITC have seven things in common

1. Have earned income
2. Have a valid Social Security number
3. Do not file as married filing separately
4. Generally are not a nonresident alien
5. Are not a qualifying child of another person
6. Are not filing Form 2555 or Form 2555-EZ
7. Have limited investment income

Four most common EITC filing errors:

1. Claiming a child who does not meet the qualifying tests for age, relationship and residency
2. Filing as single or head of household when married
3. Under or over reporting income or expenses
4. Social Security number and last name mismatches

Going for tax help or return preparation? Go prepared with:

- Valid driver's license or other photo id card for you and your spouse if filing a joint return.
- Social security cards or a Social Security number (SSN) verification letter for all persons listed on the return
- Birth dates for all persons listed on return
- All income statements: Forms W-2 and 1099, Social Security, unemployment, and other statements, such as pensions, stocks, interest and any documents showing taxes withheld. If self-employed or you own or run a business, bring records of all your income
- All records of expenses, such as tuition, mortgage interest, or real estate taxes. If self-employed or you own or run a business, bring records of all your expenses.
- Copies of last year's state and federal tax returns, if you have them
- Bank routing numbers and account numbers to direct deposit any refund
- Dependent child care information: name and address of who you paid and either the caretaker's SSN or other tax identification number
- Both spouses to sign forms to e-file your joint tax return

Your preparer needs to ask many questions to file your return correctly.



See if you qualify.

www.irs.gov/eitc

Or ask your tax preparer



Workers May Qualify for Earned Income Tax Credit



The Division of Revenue and Taxation wants to alert workers about a special tax credit. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), is a tax credit for people who earn low to modest incomes. EITC can be a boost to you and your family. The credit can also reduce the tax you owe.

To qualify for EITC you must have earned income. Earned income includes all the taxable income and wages you get from working for someone else, yourself or from a business or farm you own. Your ability to claim will depend on three factors: (1) the amount you earn, (2) the type of filer you are, and (3) the number of dependents you have.

How do you qualify?

- You have worked and earned income under \$57,414
- You have investment income below \$10,000 in the tax year 2021
- You have a valid Social Security number by the due date of your 2021 return
- You are a U.S. citizen or a resident alien for the entire year

What you need?

- Income statements such as W-2s and 1099s
- Documents showing taxes withheld or money paid to you
- Any expenses or adjustments to your income

You may claim the Earned Income Tax Credit for a child if you meet the rules for a qualifying child.

A qualifying child must:

- Have a valid Social Security Number
- Meet all 4 tests for a qualifying child
- Not be claimed by more than one person as a qualifying child

If you don't have a qualifying child, you may be able to claim the EITC if you:

- Earn income below a certain threshold
- Live in the United States for more than half the tax year
- Must be a certain age at the end of the tax year
- Get disability income
- Are a member of the military who was deployed and receiving nontaxable pay

EITC Table for Tax Year 2021

Dependents	Max Adjusted Gross Income (Single, Head of Household, Married Filing Separate*)	Max Adjust Gross Income (Married Filing Jointly)	Max Credit
0	\$21,430	\$27,380	\$1,502
1	\$42,158	\$48,108	\$3,618
2	\$47,915	\$53,865	\$5,980
3+	\$51,464	\$57,414	\$6,728

*Taxpayers who file Married Filing Separate must meet the requirements under 2021 ARPA.



See if you qualify.
www.irs.gov/eitc
Or ask your tax preparer

If you qualify for EITC, you must file an income tax return and claim the credit to get it, even if you owe no tax or aren't required to file a return. Go to www.irs.gov/eitc for information about EITC, earned income, qualifying children, and disability income

Opinion

Hafa Adail Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Conservative zealotry is hobbling the pandemic response. It will cost lives

Amid the spread of the most contagious coronavirus variant yet, major decisions by conservative politicians and judges at the federal and state levels are making it virtually impossible for public health authorities to contain the virus and keep the public safe. This ideological zealotry will cost lives.

The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday blocked the Biden administration's effort to impose a vaccine mandate in workplaces, which would have dramatically boosted vaccination rates and defused key superspreader situations. In Missouri, the Parson administration's premature back-to-normal policies make no special sick-leave provisions for infected state workers, incentivizing them to bring the contagion into the office. It's as if conservatives are trying to ensure the coronavirus thrives.

President Joe Biden's vaccine mandate for major employers was flexible to the point of drawing criticism from medical experts for not being strong enough. Employees who didn't want to vaccinate had the option of regular testing instead, and there was a religious opt-out.

Yet the court's six conservatives on Thursday struck it down as being outside the power of the federal government—this despite the fact that the mandate was promulgated under the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, an agency whose entire congressionally approved mission is to ensure safety in the workplace. Under what twisted reinterpretation of conservatism is an agency with that particular function not allowed to address a virus that has killed more than 800,000 Americans to date and has been spread largely through workplaces?

The real-world effect of the ruling will be to further the spread of the virus while putting large employers even more in the crosshairs of the culture wars than they already are. Employers who, for sound business reasons, want vaccination mandates for their workforces will have a difficult time imposing their own such rules now in the face of employee pushback and, in some red states, actual mandate prohibitions.

In Missouri, meanwhile, Gov. Mike Parson's determination to declare the crisis over and move on puts state employees in a pandemic box. The state's current policy requires workers who test positive to quarantine at home, burning their regular sick days or losing pay. That provides a strong incentive for the infected to hide their infections and return to the office, furthering the spread.

No wonder hospitals in Missouri and around the country are overwhelmed. But thanks to a separate Supreme Court ruling last week, at least health care workers in facilities that get federal funding now must abide by vaccine mandates—though even that no-brainer squeaked by on a 5-4 vote.

With astonishing nerve, leading Republicans are actually blaming Biden for the latest viral surge, even as they undermine commonsense pandemic policies in the name of "freedom." In reality, they're protecting the freedom of a deadly virus to spread.

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NEWS ITEM: IN 2021 AMERICANS SET A NEW RECORD FOR GAMBLING ...



The brazen, mind-boggling Republican revisionism regarding Jan. 6? It never ends

There are many ways to describe what happened in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6, 2021.

It was an insurrection, a riot, an attempt to violently overthrow the results of a legitimate presidential election. It was the predictable outcome of Donald Trump's relentless, desperate Big Lie about Joe Biden's victory and his thinly veiled calls for mayhem.

It was an intelligence failure of epic proportions on the part of the FBI and law enforcement agencies charged with protecting the Capitol and its occupants.

We know from multiple sources that Trump sat in his office for more than three hours, riveted by the violence on television, while advisors, his own daughter and lawmakers in mortal danger begged him to intervene.

Among those who pleaded in vain for help was House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, who told his colleagues that Trump's response was: "Well Kevin, I guess these people are more upset about the election than you are."

Later that day, on the House floor, McCarthy was—briefly—honest about what had just unfolded.

"The violence, destruction and chaos we saw earlier was unacceptable, undemocratic and un-American," he said. "It was the saddest day I've ever had serving as a member in this institution."

That is how the day should be remembered.

And yet, the noxious gases had barely dissipated, the broken glass barely swept away when Republican revisionism began: Yes, a handful of people died and dozens of law enforcement officers were seriously injured in hand-to-hand combat described as "medieval," but it wasn't Trump's fault. Maybe the rioters weren't even pro-Trump.

"Republicans do not join protest mobs," opined Rush Limbaugh the next day. "They do not loot and they don't riot. ... But a tiny minority of these protesters, and undoubtedly including some antifa Democrat-sponsored instigators, did decide to go to the Capitol to protest."

Before the month was out, McCarthy had slouched his way to Mar-a-Lago to regain the good graces of his lord and master. By October, McCarthy was actively trying to undermine the work of the House Select Committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack, threatening to punish telecommunication companies who comply with the committee's request to preserve phone records of a group of Republican members of Congress involved with the Trump rally that preceded the attacks.

Like so many who have wriggled under Trump's thumb, former Vice President Mike Pence, whose life was in actual jeopardy on Jan. 6 because he refused to cheat for Trump, has decided his integrity is dispensable after all.

"I know the media wants to distract from the Biden administration's failed agenda by focusing on one day in January," he said in October. "They want to use that one day to try and demean the character and intentions of 74 million Americans who believed we could be strong again and prosperous again and supported our administration in 2016 and 2020."

By ROBIN ABCARIAN

Los Angeles Times

Robin Abcarian is an opinion columnist at the Los Angeles Times.



Ashli Babbitt, who attempted to breach the barricaded Speaker's Lobby and was killed by an officer, has become a martyr to the Trump-loving right. In July, Trump described her as an "innocent, wonderful, incredible woman."

In Georgia's Cobb County, local Republicans will mark the one-year anniversary of the insurrection with a candlelight vigil, not to honor the courage and lives of the officers who fought to protect our democracy, but for the "J-6 Patriots held in DC prison."

(For the record, more than 700 people have been arrested in connection with the day's violence. Seventy-one rioters have been sentenced, mostly on misdemeanor convictions, according to Politico's Insurrection Tracker; 30 have received prison terms.)

Infamously, Republican Rep. Andy Clyde of Georgia, claimed that video inside the Capitol on Jan. 6 appeared to show a "normal tourist visit."

Is it preposterous to think these lies may eventually take root? Hardly.

The United States has an unfortunate tendency toward historical amnesia and denial, particularly when it comes to the bad behavior of white people. How else to explain why we fight over the importance of teaching the history and legacy of slavery? Or why the traitors who fought on the Civil War's losing side have been valorized with statues and namesakes?

A raft of recent polls has revealed that at least among Republicans—which has sadly become the party of white nationalism—the horror of Jan. 6 is beginning to fade.

One year ago, according to a Politico/Morning Consult national tracking poll, 51% of Republicans thought their party was headed in the right direction; that portion has now leapt to 65%.

In December, 78% of Republicans in a Quinnipiac University poll said they wanted Trump to run again. Seven months earlier, only 66% had wanted him to run. (Slightly better news: A majority of Americans—58%—said they don't want Trump in the race, and 51% think he has been undermining democracy since the 2020 election.)

Democrats, the poll found, are far more likely to describe Jan. 6 as having had a "major impact" on their worldview. But among voters in both parties, the Politico/Morning Consult poll also detected a "weariness" verging on lack of interest in the insurrection.

This is especially worrisome given that Republican politicians have been working overtime to change local and state election laws to suppress the vote.

See REPUBLICAN on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Americans used to respect public health. Then came COVID-19

Some of the most alarming government actions since the COVID-19 pandemic began have weakened state authority to safeguard public health. At least 26 states have removed traditional powers from local health departments, the institutions tasked with protecting us.

New state laws, for example, take away or limit health officials' abilities to require masks, promote vaccinations, close restaurants and schools or even impose quarantines.

These limitations on local authority might seem inevitable in a country where voters often fear government overreach. But in fact these changes run counter to the historical trend in the U.S., which has overwhelmingly been to increase public health powers during epidemics.

At the beginning of European settlement in America, there were no government health departments. But, faced with devastating, terrifying and frequent outbreaks of deadly diseases, colonists established temporary boards of health to set public policy intended to save lives.

These temporary boards quarantined ships in the harbor, required sick residents to isolate at home and disbanded when the epidemics passed. But, over time, these boards became permanent. They increasingly expanded local and state authority to regulate community behavior in the name of public health. The public cooperated throughout the 19th and 20th centuries as Americans developed a sense of civic obligation and responsibility.

Because of this growing public commitment, the powers of cities and states to control disease increased with new epidemics.

Repeated occurrences of yellow fever, cholera, smallpox and scarlet fever led to the establishment of public health departments that we recognize today.

Paid commissioners and health boards, and their staffs of inspectors and regulators, isolated the sick in contagious disease hospitals, vaccinated residents and created a sanitary environment. Health departments, often in conjunction with other city and state agencies, built clean water and sewer systems, regulated garbage collection and disposal, inspected restaurants, monitored school environments and set safety standards to ensure safe milk and food supplies. During epidemics, officials often forbade public gatherings, closed schools and bars and insisted on social distancing in churches.

Throughout our history, Americans learned that their individual liberty to oppose a health order during a time of community danger must be subsumed to the public good. The right of health officials to try to control infectious diseases was confirmed with the 1905 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Jacobson vs. Massachusetts*, which empowered local and state health authorities to order vaccinations during epidemic outbreaks when public health was threatened. If some individuals did not comply, they could be fined or jailed.

Although COVID-19 has ignited controversy over local and state health agencies, public acceptance of their power and authority was widespread throughout the 20th century. In 1947, when smallpox threatened New York City, 6 million New Yorkers voluntarily lined up in the streets awaiting their inoculations to comply with the health department's vaccination ruling. This public cooperation took less than a month and resulted in a very low number of infected people.

In addition, since the 1950s, the federal government has played an increasingly prominent role in public health. State governments sought federal help when disease crises crossed state lines and when implementation of effective action required interstate cooperation. During the 1947 smallpox outbreak, the U.S. Public Health Service traced the contacts of the individual who brought smallpox to New York, following his steps across the country—a

By **JUDITH WALZER LEAVITT**

Los Angeles Times



Judith Walzer Leavitt is professor emerita in the history of medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

task outside the purview of city health officials.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as in earlier health crises, state health departments have had to depend on federal support and national coordination to contain the disease. They have not had the capacity themselves to produce an effective vaccine, and since vaccines were developed, states have needed help with procurement and distribution. They still need help with maintaining equipment and personnel in hospitals to care for rapid increases in the number of sick people. And they need national leaders to promote the importance of vaccination and continued mask use.

Yet such coordination in local, state and federal efforts is weakened by the new state laws that limit health officials' powers, which will leave us unable to deal with future pandemics effectively.

In earlier periods of American history, increased authority and funding for disease control would have been routine. Now the politicization of masking, testing and vaccination has made efforts to curb COVID-19 even more difficult.

Historically the public response to community health danger was ruled by the need to care about others. This tradition has served the country well over the last 300 years. But it is no longer standard in America. The freedom to not wear a face mask has become more important to many people than any obligation to others. Choosing narrow personal liberties over community cooperation and protection does not bode well for our ability to withstand future crises.

Statement of condolences to the people of Tonga

By **UIFA'ATALI AMATA**

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Uifa'atali Amata is the delegate of American Samoa in the U.S. Congress.

Editor's Note: Delegate Uifa'atali Amata released the following statement of condolences for the people of the Kingdom of Tonga:

The people of the Kingdom of Tonga are in our thoughts and most importantly in our prayers during this sad time. I think especially of families who haven't heard from loved ones yet because of the limited communications following the devastating tsunami and volcanic ash. In American Samoa, and neighboring Samoa, we have deep memories of the 2009 tsunami, and our hearts go out to Tonga as they help neighbors, assess the damage and begin recovery efforts. The United States and other nations have been generous in times like this, and I think we will see both possibilities of international aid and private charitable help, and I know God will bless such efforts. May God be with the people of Tonga and the decision-making of their leaders. **(PR)**

REPUBLICAN

From Page 8

press votes and pave the way to overturning elections they lose.

Thankfully, the House Select Committee, which has worked behind closed doors for six months, will soon hold public hearings. Americans deserve to hear the truth, and they need to be reminded that Trump was responsible for almost derailing our democracy.

"I think in five or 10 years, when schoolkids learn about Jan. 6, they're going to get the accurate story," said Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, one of two Republicans who have committed political suicide by joining the committee. "And I think that's going to be dependent on what we do here."

The idiocy of vaccine mandates for kids

The old legal maxim is that everything which is not forbidden is permitted. Many public-health experts apparently have their own version of this rule—whatever is not forbidden must be mandated.

It was less than three months ago that the Food and Drug Administration approved the COVID-19 vaccine for children on an emergency basis, and already there are debates whether schools should mandate it and jurisdictions prohibit unvaccinated kids from engaging in activities.

California, Louisiana and Washington, D.C., have scheduled mandates to take effect when the FDA fully approves the vaccine for kids. Los Angeles and Oakland have mandates, although they've been delayed. New York City mayor Eric Adams says he's weighing a mandate, and bills in the New York State legislature would implement one statewide.

When the FDA advisory panel met last October, several experts said they hoped the move wouldn't lead to mandates. FDA official Peter Marks pooh-poohed the possibility, evidently underestimating the irresistible urge of officialdom in blue areas toward pandemic coercion.

The decision whether kids get vaccinated or not properly belongs to parents. Yes, other vaccinations are a condition of attending school, but COVID vaccinations aren't going to eliminate COVID, the way, say, Jonas Salk's miraculous innovation eliminated polio. With the advent of omicron, it's not even clear childhood vaccinations will do much to dent the spread. On top of this, COVID is relatively mild in children, whereas polio was a dread childhood disease.

If the case for adults getting vaccinated is extraordinarily strong, it is much less so for minors, especially for healthy younger kids who tend to be at the least risk.

Why, parents might think, take any chances with a new vaccine if it is protecting from a minimal threat (or their kids already had the virus)? Even if you believe this is the wrong call, it's not obviously unreasonable.

The medical news outlet Stat reported on an FDA model that looked at the risk to boys ages 5-11 from myocarditis, a heart condition that can affect boys in particular after getting vaccinated. According to Stat, the FDA analysts concluded that although "the vaccine might trigger slightly more myocarditis-related hospitalizations in boys than Covid-19 hospitalizations it would

By **RICH LOWRY**

King Features Synd., Inc.



Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

prevent in the same population, the benefits still might outweigh the risks, given that Covid cases that require hospitalization are generally more severe than myocarditis cases."

Rather than trust parents to weigh such considerations on their own, places like Los Angeles want to bring down the hammer. The school board there wanted students 12 and older to be vaccinated by Jan. 10. Then, unvaccinated kids would be relegated to remote learning. When the school board realized that 30,000 students weren't vaccinated, a number that would overwhelm whatever dubious capacity the district has for remote learning, it backed off.






The calculus here makes no sense. To avoid an unlikely harm—unvaccinated kids getting a serious case of COVID—the schools wanted to impose an almost-guaranteed harm by excluding thousands of students from the classroom, kneecapping their education. At best, this is playing chicken with the well-being of children; at worst, it is thoughtless and cruel policy in stubborn pursuit of the goal of substituting the judgment of public-school mandarins for parents.

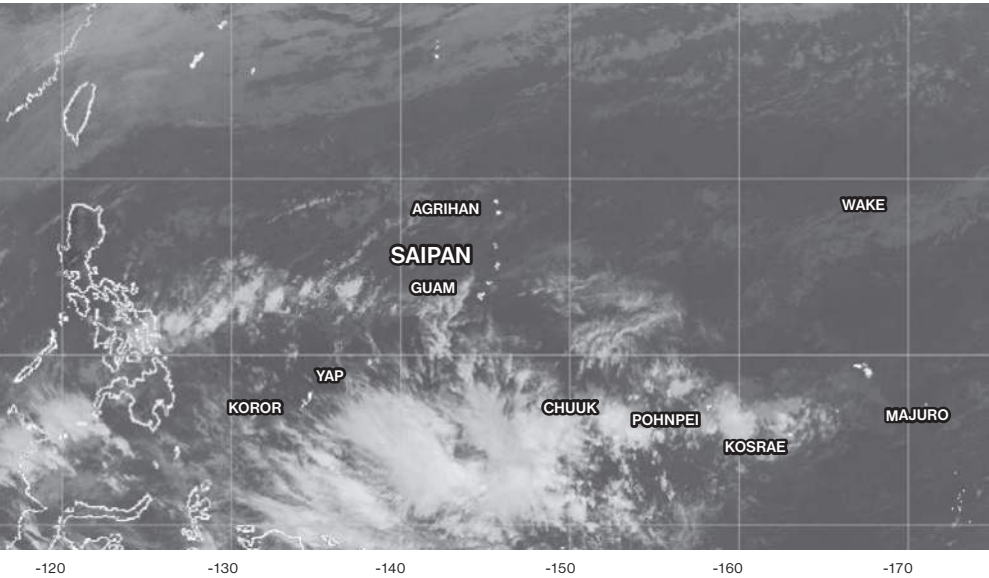
Already, roughly 40,000 students have dropped out or disengaged from L.A. schools this year, and the school board wanted effectively to match that via ham-handed enforcement of its mandate.

The same impulse to punish kids whose parents don't want to go along is seen in vaccine passport policies, like that in New York City, that exclude unvaccinated children from a swath of activities in public places and from after-school programs. It's as if public officials got together and decided children hadn't experienced enough social isolation already during the pandemic.

One can only hope there's enough pushback from parents who value their judgment and authority over that of the politicians and administrators whose default is mandates over persuasion.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Partly sunny with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly sunny and breezy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers	
85°	20°	76°	85°	78°	85°	86°	78°	86°	75°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:32 AM, TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line remains draped over the Marianas. The shear line extends to the east-northeast to the dateline and beyond, passing northwest of Hawaii. The Ipan buoy reveals combined seas of 6 to 8 feet which are composed mainly of east-northeast swell. There is also a north swell from which the buoy is blocked by Guam, which raises the seas another foot or two.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	AM Showers	28 / 24 °F	
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	30 / 25 °F	
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	29/ 26 °F	
Chuuk	Scattered Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F	
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	30 / 25 °F	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	30 / 27°F	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	29 / 26 °F	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	05:47 AM	18:49 PM
Thursday	05:47 AM	18:49 PM
Friday	05:47 AM	18:49 PM
Saturday	05:48 AM	18:49 PM
Sunday	05:48 AM	18:49 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	05:56 PM	19:02 PM
Thursday	-	06:45 PM	19:59 PM
Friday	-	07:35 PM	20:54 PM
Saturday	-	08:27 AM	21:47 PM
Sunday	-	09:19 PM	22:37 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 17, 2022

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1,3,5,7	PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2,4,6,7
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
				TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3452	2:00PM	5:20PM	2	7C3451	8:00AM	1:00PM	3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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Mobil renews support for volunteer

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
Kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The San Jose Mobil Gas Station owned and operated by JEM Co. Ltd. will continue to sponsor a local volunteer with a gas allowance of \$100 as long as he continues his work of beautifying Saipan’s pristine beaches.

According to JEM commission agent Jovita Flores, Mobil renewed effective last Friday the \$100 monthly gasoline allowance for Max Aguon.,

“Mobil will be continuing our monthly donation to al-

leviate Max’s expenses as he goes around the island to keep the beaches clean for our tourists,” she said.

Flores said that Mobil has been provided the same donation to Aguon for the past year, and it has been worth it as he continues to do a wonderful job of keeping the island’s beaches clean.

“We see him out there and we support his efforts to beautify our island,” she said.

Ed Flores, another Mobil commission agent, said he loves what Aguon continues

to do for the community and hopes this donation will motivate him to continue to do the good work he does.


Meanwhile, Aguon said he is very grateful for Mobil’s support.

“I want to thank the Mobil gas station for continuing to support me with this grant so I can continue to do my best in cleaning our beaches,” he said.


Aguon has received various praises and awards for his cleanup activities that also help promote environmental awareness in the community.



Max Aguon, fourth from the left, poses for a photo with Mobil San Jose staff after JEM Co. Ltd. renewed his \$100 gas allowance donation to encourage him to continue cleaning Saipan beaches.
KIMBERLY B. ESMORES



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



JVA No. 22 – 039

Opening Date: January 6, 2022
Closing Date: January 20, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	Trades Assistant
DEPARTMENT:	Wastewater Division
LOCATION:	Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$16,742.00 to \$22,602.00 per annum, Non- Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	Two(2)

The incumbent will be under the overall supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the Wastewater Division.

Duties:

- The Trades Assistant assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily maintenance activities.
- Performing daily well and pump station facility maintenance, cleaning and monitoring;
- Assisting plumbing and chlorine maintenance crew;
- Utilizing digging equipment for locating and repairing leaks;
- Repairing and securing pressure reducer valves, main valves, service lines and laterals, and booster pumps;
- Assisting with meter installation and repair;
- Collecting water samples;
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.


Licensing/Certification:

- Valid U.S. Driver’s License with appropriate class;

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.


How to Apply: You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday, 7:30am – 4:30pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application and resume can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-22-013

Lower Base Sewer Phase 2 – Gravity Mains

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Lower Base Sewer Phase 2 – Gravity Mains in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies and materials necessary to complete the scope of work which consists of the installation of sewer gravity mains, manholes, sewer laterals and connections to the new sewer system, connection to the existing sewer on Isa Drive, concrete encasement of new sewer mains, utility crossings, restoration of site pavement, temporary soil erosion control, temporary traffic control, and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the sewer and water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **265 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval of the USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **\$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **January 12, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “**CUC-IFB-22-013, Lower Base Sewer Phase 2 – Gravity Mains**” to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 1, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.


This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 18, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and to Christie Sablan, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician – christie.sablan@cucgov.org.


CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CUC-RFP-22-005

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES FOR LOWER BASE SEWER REPLACEMENT – PHASE II

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting a fee proposal from a professional archaeologist who meets the U.S. Department of Interior qualifications (36CFR61) to create a work plan to prepare information, data and documentation needed to conduct archaeological monitoring during construction of all areas identified by the CNMI HPO for the construction of a new sewer line on Rte. 314 – Lower Base Drive and Rte. 30 – Chalan Pale Arnold Road in Lower Base, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval of the USEPA.

The scope of Archaeological Services will include, but not be limited to:

1. Conduct background research to document the environmental and land-use histories of the project site.
2. Prepare a monitoring plan to the specifications of the Scope of Work and the guidelines for research designs.
3. Implement the monitoring plan activities following the approved plan.
4. Prepare an End of Fieldwork Letter that provides a general description of the project, work completed, burials recovered, sites and features identified.
5. Prepare a draft report summarizing the monitoring and data recovery activities & within six months of completing the fieldwork.
6. Prepare and submit, based on review comments, two final hard copies and one CD-ROM copy of the archaeological report to the HPO.
7. Prepare and submit revised CNMI Site Forms for previously recorded sites, as needed, and new site forms for all newly documented sites.
8. Submit all artifacts collected and pay all fees according to the Commonwealth Museum of History and Culture (CMHC) to the specifications of the current draft curation standards.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the PROPOSAL must be submitted in a SEALED ENVELOPE marked “**CUC-RFP-22-005: Archaeological Services for Lower Base Sewer Replacement – Phase II**” to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **January 27, 2022, at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RFP requirements in the course of proposer’s preparation of the RFP under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RFP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 12, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copies to Nicolette Villagomez, Water/Wastewater Engineer, via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC Senior Administrative Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RFP, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

'Most of NMI's COVID-related deaths were unvaxxed or partially vaxxed'

By JOSHUA SANTOS

joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Not including the CNMI's 21st fatality, the average age of the CNMI's 20 COVID-19-related deaths is 67. By vaccination status, 14 were unvaccinated or partially vaccinated while the remaining six were fully vaccinated. Of the six who were fully vaccinated, only one had received a booster shot.

Also, all 20 individuals who have died had other chronic health conditions and most of the individuals were diagnosed too late to receive

monoclonal antibody treatment, she said.

These were all learned during a virtual news briefing on Jan. 14, which took place prior to the CNMI logging its 21st COVID-19-related death, which was confirmed by CHCC and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force the night of Jan. 14.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña said at the briefing that the average age of the 20 COVID-19-related deaths in the CNMI was 67. By comparison, the average age of those in the CNMI who have tested

positive for COVID-19 is 30.

Of the 20, 14 had either never received a COVID-19 vaccine or had only received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. The remaining six were fully vaccinated, having received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Most of the six who were fully vaccinated received their two doses in early 2021, and "were not up to date with their vaccinations," said Muña. Only one of the six had received a booster shot.

Of the 95 individuals who were hospitalized as a result of COVID-19 since Dec. 1, 2021, 55 were unvaccinated or partially vaccinated. On

that note, Muña asked all who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms to seek care or get tested for COVID-19 early, as you may be eligible to receive MAB treatment or other treatments given soon after infection.

Stephanie Kern-Allely, regional communicable disease epidemiologist for the Pacific Island Health Officers Association, who has returned to the CNMI to continue to provide epidemiology support and work closely with CHCC, said that, like the CNMI's vaccination rate, the CNMI's booster rate, "is much higher than in a lot of areas in the

world." If you are 12 years and older and eligible for one, Kern-Allely advises you to receive a booster shot.

As of Jan. 14, Kern-Allely said that about 40% of the CNMI's eligible population who had received second doses of a COVID-19 vaccine have already received their booster shots. Pointing to waning immunity, she encouraged the roughly remaining 60% to get their booster shots.

"We have a lot of folks that are still eligible. ... We know that our immunity does wane over time after those two shots, and because of our early, strong vaccination [efforts], a lot of

folks are eligible now. I really want to encourage those booster shots [and] also remind folks that the eligibility has now increased," said Kern-Allely.

She also urged symptomatic individuals to mask up, stay home, and avail of the CNMI's increased COVID-19 testing capacity.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approved on Jan. 5 expanding the eligibility of booster doses to 12 to 17 year olds. CDC now recommends that individuals aged 12 to 17 years old receive their booster shots five months after their initial Pfizer-BioNTech vaccination series.

Rota delegation passes bill pays each casino commissioner only when casino is operating

The Rota Legislative Delegation passed Friday a Senate local bill that seeks to provide compensation for the Rota Casino Gaming Commission members, each in the amount of \$60,000 per year but only

when the casino is actually "actively operating" on the island.

At the delegation's session last week, all four members—Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind), Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind), Sen. Victor B. Hocog (R), and Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind)—voted "yes" to pass Senate Local Bill 22-06.

Santos, co-chair of the RLD, told Saipan Tribune Monday that action on the bill was earlier deferred pending their counsel's legal opinion as to whether a local bill can trump an initiative ratified by the people. Santos said their legal counsel had already rendered his legal opinion that it can be done.

She said their legal counsel cited a court ruling in Blanco

Maratita v Borja case law, where the Superior Court ruled that the CNMI Constitution grants power to the legislative delegation to pass local laws pertaining to local matters defined by the Legislature.

Santos said the court further noted that local laws enacted by initiative may be amended, altered, repealed, superseded in any fashion by the enactment of subsequent local law enacted by the delegation.

She said the court ruling allows a delegation law to regulate gambling and to amend a law enacted by local initiative.

Further, Santos said, Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig, who re-appointed some members of the Rota Casino Gaming Commission and appointed two new

members, submitted a comment that this local bill will ease the public pressure exerted by the community's displeasure with the payment of the RGCC members' compensation when there is no casino and the municipality is forced to fork out funds to pay part of their salary.

The senator said members of the former 17th Rota Municipal Council also supported a similar local bill during their tenure.

Manglona, who authored Senate Local Bill 22-06, said the municipality spends \$300,000 each year for the compensation of the casino commission members even if there are no active casinos on Rota, adding that the commission members' compensation is a huge financial burden to the municipality's obligations.

He said to reduce the municipality's obligations and to address community concerns raised at the town hall meeting held at the Rota Mayor's Office last May 6, the delegation proposed to amend the commission's compensation until the casino licensee is actually operating a casino on Rota.

The bill repeals the Commonwealth Code and reenacts it to read that when there is an "active casino" in operation, the members of the commission shall each be compensated at the rate of \$60,000 per year.

The legislation also proposes that when there is no active casino in operation, the members of the commission shall each be compensated no more than \$60 for a full-day meeting and no more than \$30 for a half day or less meeting, provided that the compensation shall not exceed a maximum of \$6,000 per year."

Meanwhile, at the same session Friday, the four-member Rota Legislative Delegation also passed Senate Local Bill 22-08 that seeks to provide a timeline for the confirmation or rejection by the Rota Municipal Council of the mayor's appointment to the Rota Casino Gaming Commission. (Ferdie De La Torre)



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2022-002	CDBG-DR Internal Auditor (1-Position) RE-ANNOUNCEMENT	UNGRADED \$50,000.00-\$65,000.00 per annum	Jan. 17, 2022	Feb. 16, 2022 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; CDBG-DR office located on the 3rd floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670)234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

Joey P. San Nicolas
Attorney-at-Law
San Nicolas Law Office, LLC
2nd Floor, Island Commercial Center, Rm. 203
Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai
P.O. Box 10,001 PMB 602, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7659 | Fax: (670) 234-9218
Email: jpsn@sannicolaw.net

Attorney for Executrix Marilyn Lagazon Mendiola

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: THOMAS MASGA MENDIOLA, Decedent.) Civil Action
No.: 21-0140-CV
NOTICE OF HEARING

TO: ALL HEIRS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES AND CREDITORS OF: DIEGO JOAQUIN DELEON GUERRERO CAMACHO, DECEASED.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the amended petition of Marilyn Lagazon Mendiola for the decree of final distribution will be heard before the Honorable Joseph N. Camacho, Associate Judge, on the 27th day of January, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., at Room 220, Superior Court of the Northern Mariana Islands, Susupe Village, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the order should not be made.

Dated this 18th day of January, 2022.

Hon. JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID ITB22-GOV-42200039

SUBMISSION DATE: 9:30 AM February 10, 2022

DOC FIRE ALARM & SPRINKLER SYSTEM REPAIR/REPLACEMENT

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed bids for the *Kalabera Cave Repairs & Improvements* in Marpi, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **January 19, 2021** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours. **This project will require US Treasury Listed Payment and Performance Bonds.**

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the project site, Marpi, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST February 3, 2022**. Proposers may request to participate via phone call or virtually five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled. All attendees are required to use a face mask and exercise social distancing throughout the duration of the meeting.

Questions regarding this ITB may be submitted via email to Ms. Nerissa Benavente at nerissa.benavente@gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST February 8, 2022**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.


Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **9:30 AM February 18, 2022**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI



/s/ Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services



COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CEDA)

PO Box 502149, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. No. 670-234-6245 | Fax: 670-235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

INVITATION TO BID SILVER 2009 TOYOTA YARIS

Slight damage from Typhoon Yutu | 4 cylinder | 4-door manual windows and locks | AM/FM radio and CD Player | 47,229 miles automatic | power steering and brakes | last serviced in 2019

SOLD "AS IS" AND "WHERE IS"

Visit our website at www.developcnmi.com for bid information and photos.

Volcanic ash delays aid to Tonga as scale of damage emerges

By NICK PERRY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Thick ash on an airport runway was delaying aid deliveries to the Pacific island nation of Tonga, where significant damage was being reported days after a huge undersea volcanic eruption and tsunami.

New Zealand's military is sending much-needed drinking water and other supplies, but said the ash on the runway will delay the flight at least a day. A towering ash cloud since Saturday's eruption had prevented earlier flights. New Zealand is also sending two navy ships to Tonga that will leave Tuesday and pledged an initial 1 million New Zealand dollars (\$680,000) toward recovery efforts.

Australia also sent a navy ship from Sydney to Brisbane to prepare for a support mission if needed.

Communications with Tonga have been extremely



This satellite image provided by Maxar Technologies shows the main port facilities in Nuku'alofa, Tonga Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022, after a huge undersea volcanic eruption and tsunami.

SATELLITE IMAGE ©2022 MAXAR TECHNOLOGIES VIA AP

WHO supports whole-of-UN response to volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga

The World Health Organization is closely coordinating with other United Nations agencies and partners to support the response to the recent volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga, including acting as a central channel of information in the face of continued telecommunications outages.

The Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupted at approximately 5:30pm local time on Jan. 15, spewing forth an ash plume said to be almost 20km high. The eruption, which was the largest Tonga—and potentially the world—has faced in 30 years, could be heard as far away as Australia and New Zealand and caused tsunami alerts to be issued across the Pacific.

The government of the Kingdom of Tonga reacted swiftly, including deploying a naval vessel to the Ha'api islands carrying the WHO-trained Tonga Emergency Medical Assistance Team to help treat any people who may have been injured. The government has advised the Tongan public to remain indoors, use masks if going out, and to drink bottled water to avoid consequences of the ashfall.

The United Nations has been working to support the government's response since the moment the eruption occurred, with WHO's Country Liaison Officer for Tonga,

Dr. Yutaro Setoya, playing a critical role in channeling communication between UN agencies and the Tongan government, and between the UN and their staff in Tonga. With international phone lines and internet connectivity still down, Dr. Setoya's satellite phone is one of the few ways to get information into and out of the country.

"Yuta has literally been standing outside from dawn until long into the night for the past few days to ensure that the phone can reach the satellite signal and he can pass along vital information," said WHO's Health Cluster Coordinator for the Pacific, Sean Casey. "All of us here at WHO, and in the broader UN family, are thinking of Tonga right now and doing what we can to support the government's response efforts."

Initial reports from inside Tonga, channeled via Dr. Setoya, are that buildings and infrastructure have been damaged—around 100 houses have been damaged and 50 completely destroyed just on the main island of Tongatapu. Two deaths have been reported to date. Many remain displaced, with 89 people taking shelter in evacuation centers on the island of 'Eua and many more seeking shelter with relatives. Around 2cm of ash and dust has fallen on Tongatapu, raising concerns of air pollution and the potential contamination of food

and water supplies. Thankfully, all health facilities on Tongatapu are fully functioning and cleanup efforts have been initiated.

However, information on the degree of destruction is still being gathered. The Ha'apai and Vava'u island groups, for example, remain out of contact with the capital. There are particular concerns about the smaller and low-lying islands of Mango and Fonoi in the Ha'apai group.

The UN's emergency response is coordinated via the Pacific Humanitarian Team, which brings together United Nations agencies, the Red Cross movement, and international non-governmental organizations to organize the provision of in-country and remote support to the Tongan government's response efforts. The PHT's initial focus is on supporting the re-establishment of communications, finding ways to bring in relief supplies, and providing technical advice on a range of issues such as how to ensure the safety of ash-affected drinking water.

"We have very little way to contact the people of Tonga right now but, for all of their family and friends in other countries around the world, please know that your loved ones have our support," added Casey. "Our thoughts—but more importantly our action—is with all of those who have been affected." (PR)

limited, but New Zealand and Australia sent military surveillance flights to assess the damage on Monday.

U.N. humanitarian officials and Tonga's government "report significant infrastructural damage around Tongatapu," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

"There has been no contact from the Ha'apai Group of islands, and we are particularly concerned about two small low-lying islands—Mango and Fonoi—following surveillance flights confirming substantial property damage," Dujarric said.

New Zealand's High Commission in Tonga also reported "significant damage" along the western coast of the main island of Tongatapu, including to resorts and along the waterfront area.

Satellite images captured the spectacular eruption, with a plume of ash, steam and gas rising like a giant mushroom above the South Pacific. Tsunami waves of about 80 centimeters (2.7 feet) crashed into Tonga's shoreline, and crossed the Pacific, causing minor damage from New Zealand to

Santa Cruz, California. The eruption set off a sonic boom that could be heard as far away as Alaska.

Two people drowned in Peru, which also reported an oil spill after waves moved a ship that was transferring oil at a refinery.

New Zealand's Acting High Commissioner for Tonga, Peter Lund, said there were unconfirmed reports of up to three fatalities on Tonga so far.

One death has been confirmed by family: British woman Angela Glover, 50, who was swept away by a wave.

Nick Eleini said his sister's body had been found and that her husband survived. "I understand that this terrible accident came about as they tried to rescue their dogs," Eleini told Sky News. He said it had been his sister's life dream "to live in the South Pacific and 'she loved her life there.'"

The explosion of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano, about 64 kilometers (40 miles) north of Nuku'alofa, was the latest in a series of dramatic eruptions. In late 2014 and early 2015, eruptions created a small new island and disrupted air travel to the Pa-

cific archipelago.

Earth imaging company Planet Labs PBC had watched the island after a new vent began erupting in late December. Satellite images showed how drastically the volcano had shaped the area, creating a growing island off Tonga.

The U.N. World Food Program is exploring how to bring in relief supplies and more staff and has received a request to restore communication lines in Tonga, Dujarric said.

One complicating factor is that Tonga has managed to avoid outbreaks of COVID-19. New Zealand said its military staff were vaccinated and willing to follow Tonga's protocols.

New Zealand's military said it hoped the airfield in Tonga would be opened either Wednesday or Thursday. The military said it had considered an airdrop but that was "not the preference of the Tongan authorities."

Communications with the island nation is limited because the single underwater fiber-optic cable that connects Tonga to the rest of the world was likely severed in the eruption. The company that owns the cable and repairs could take weeks.

Samuela Fonua, who chairs the board at Tonga Cable Ltd., said the cable appeared to have been severed about 10 to 15 minutes after the eruption. He said the cable lies atop and within coral reef, which can be sharp.

Fonua said a ship would need to pull up the cable to assess the damage and then crews would need to fix it. A single break might take a week to repair, he said, while multiple breaks could take up to three weeks. He added that it was unclear yet when it would be safe for a ship to venture near the undersea volcano to undertake the work.

A second undersea cable that connects the islands within Tonga also appeared to have been severed, Fonua said. However, a local phone network was working, allowing Tongans to call each other. But he said the lingering ash cloud was continuing to make even satellite phone calls abroad difficult.

Waves from eruption in Tonga cause oil spill in Peru

LIMA, Peru (AP)—Unusually high waves attributed to the eruption of an undersea volcano in Tonga caused an oil spill on the Peruvian coast, but authorities said Monday the spill was controlled within hours and there's an ongoing process to clean the area.

The Peruvian Civil Defense Institute said in a press release that a ship was loading oil into

La Pampilla refinery on the Pacific coast on Sunday when strong waves moved the boat and caused a spill.

The government didn't say how many gallons were spilled only that local and federal authorities were working to clean the coast.

La Pampilla refinery, in the province of Callao near Lima's capital, belongs to the Spanish

company Repsol. It's considered the main oil processing plant in Peru. Local authorities had closed area beaches to the public since Sunday.

The eruption on Saturday caused waves that crossed the Pacific. In Peru, two people drowned off a beach and there were reports of minor damage from New Zealand to Santa Cruz, California.

Good Housekeeping

Design Recipes: Renovation do's and don'ts

By CATHY HOBBS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

It's that time of the year when many homeowners are considering renovating. While sprucing up your home can be exciting, here are some suggestions for prudent ways to approach a renovation, regardless of size.

DO'S

1. Do obtain multiple bids. Regardless of whether it's love at first sight, having multiple bids may help provide peace of mind, knowing that you didn't overpay for your renovation.

2. Do ask for previous samples of work or references. This will help ensure that your hired professional has executed similar renovation projects.

3. Do have inspiration images and overall design direction. There is nothing worse than flying blind on a renovation project.

DON'T'S

1. Don't purchase your materials once your project has commenced. Instead try to have fixtures, appliances, etc., preordered to avoid delays in your project, which will likely increase cost.

2. Don't submit change orders, or try to submit as few as possible. Many contractors charge fees relating to changing work orders.

3. Don't micromanage. While it is prudent to be on top of your project, it may be counterproductive to be overly involved.



The completed renovated studio.

HANDOUT/TNS

Ideas to organize your pantry cabinet

By SHANNON ANTINORI
ANGIE'S LIST

The key to a decluttered kitchen starts with pantry organization — but tackling shelf upon shelf of cans, boxes and bags of food can be daunting.

Professional organizer Erin Kelly says her company, Chicago-based Arranged by Erin, frequently gets calls from homeowners looking for help with their out-of-control pantry cabinets.

"It's a time thing," she says. "People get very overwhelmed. That's why a lot of them call."

While a home organizer can organize your pantry for you, you can also do it yourself with a few pointers.

Create categories

When it comes to organizing the pantry, grouping similar items together is critical.

"The important thing is to zone your pantry," Kelly says.

Make one section for pasta, one for canned fruits, one for vegetables, one for spices and so on, Kelly advises.

Grouping items by category will help you cut down your cooking time by eliminating

the need to hunt through the pantry for a certain item.

"The best thing is to pull everything out, wipe (the pantry) down and put it all back by category," Kelly says.

If you have a child or relative with allergies or special dietary needs, keep their items on a separate shelf or in a certain "zone." Kelly also recommends labeling items to help a nanny or babysitter know which items are OK for each child to have.

Save money with storage

Creative storage options won't just keep your pantry cabi-

net neat — they can also save you money.

People wind up buying duplicates of items because they can't see what they've got hiding in the depths of the pantry, Kelly says.

"It's tempting to stock up, but I don't need three ketchups in my pantry," Kelly says. Deep pantry shelves can add to the problem, making it difficult to see what's in stock.

Retailers like The Container Store and Target sell clear storage containers that are perfect for storing items like spices, packets and pastas, Kelly says.

Plastic stair-stepper organizers are good for storing items like canned goods, making it easy to see what's there, she adds. Stackable shelving and wire baskets can also help you declutter and keep items visible.

Being able to see what you have will help you re-evaluate the way you shop, saving you time, pantry space and money, Kelly says.

Once you can see what you have, you can make a running list of what's in stock and what needs to be added to your weekly shopping list.

Find a spot for overflow

If your pantry cabinet is just not fulfilling your space needs, it may be time to find a place for your kitchen overflow.

Kelly cautions against using a garage or mudroom for extra food storage, since that can attract mice.

"I like the idea of shelves or cabinets in the basement area," she says.

Kelly recommends basement storage for items that aren't used every day, such as pots, pans and extra canned goods.

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for
Common Wealth Cannabis Co.

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Common Wealth Cannabis Co. is proposing to renovate and occupy a unit within an existing 3-storey structure measuring 15' (L) x 26'.2" (W) x 8'.6" (H) for its Cannabis Lounge Use. This use is permitted in the district as a conditional use. This site is located on Tract 21732-9 in the village of San Vicente. This area is zoned as Village Commercial.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: February 2, 2022
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Fiesta Hall, Grandvrio Resort

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, February 1, 2022. Please send written comments via e-mail to zoningboard@cnmizoning.com, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Francisco C. Aguon, Vice Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for
Triple Star International Corp.
dba Triple Star Recycling

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Triple Star International Corp., dba Triple Star Recycling, is proposing to renovate and occupy an existing 1-storey semi concrete structure measuring 100' (L) x 37' (W) x 14' (H) for its Recycling Center — Manufacturing & Processing Use. This use is permitted in the district as a conditional use. This site is located on Tract 22560-R2 in the village of As Perdido. This area is zoned as Village Commercial.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: February 2, 2022
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Fiesta Hall, Grandvrio Resort

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, February 1, 2022. Please send written comments via e-mail to zoningboard@cnmizoning.com, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Perry Inos, Jr., Chairman



Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting

February 2, 2022 | 5:00 PM
Fiesta Hall, Grandvrio Resort
Tel: 234-9661/2 • Fax: 234-9666
www.cnmizoning.com



AGENDA

- A. Preliminary Matters
 1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Adoption of 02/02/2022 Agenda
 4. Adoption of 01/19/2022 Zoning Board Meeting minutes.
 5. Public Comments (not for items to be discussed in item B. Public Hearings)
- B. Public Hearings
 1. Conditional Use Application #2020-9931 — Triple Star International Corp., dba Triple Star Recycling, is proposing to renovate and occupy an existing 1-storey semi concrete structure measuring 100' (L) x 37' (W) x 14' (H) for its Recycling Center — Manufacturing & Processing Use. This use is permitted in the district as a conditional use. This use is permitted in the district as a conditional use. This site is located on Tract 22560-R2 in the village of As Perdido. This area is zoned as Village Commercial.
 2. Conditional Use Application #2020-10659 — Common Wealth Cannabis Co. is proposing to renovate and occupy a unit within an existing 3-storey structure measuring 15' (L) x 26'.2" (W) x 8'.6" (H) for its Cannabis Lounge Use. This use is permitted in the district as a conditional use. This site is located on Tract 21732-9 in the village of San Vicente. This area is zoned as Village Commercial.
- C. New Business
 1. Saipan Cares for Animals — Amended Plans
- D. Old Business
 1. Saipan Zoning Law of 2013 — Amendments
- E. Executive Session
- F. Miscellaneous
 1. Administrator's Updates
 2. Permit & Enforcement Report
- G. Adjournment

In an effort to provide public access to this meeting during this pandemic, the Commonwealth Zoning Board will host this meeting via:

Zoom Video Communications

Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/6853007492>
Meeting Code: 685 300 7492

Life & Style

Out of this world: 555.55-carat black diamond lands in Dubai

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Auction house Sotheby's Dubai has unveiled a diamond that's literally from out of this world.

Sotheby's calls the 555.55-carat black diamond—believed to have come from outer space—"The Enigma." The rare gem was shown off on Monday to journalists as part of a tour in Dubai and Los Angeles before it is due to be auctioned off in Febru-

ary in London.

Sotheby's expects the diamond to be sold for at least 5 million British pounds (\$6.8 million). The auction house plans to accept cryptocurrency as a possible payment as well.

Sophie Stevens, a jewelry specialist at Sotheby's Dubai, told The Associated Press that the number five bears an importance significance to the diamond, which has 55 facets as well.

"The shape of the diamond

is based on the Middle-Eastern palm symbol of the Khamsa, which stands for strength and it stands for protection," she said. Khamsa in Arabic means five.

"So there's a nice theme of the number five running throughout the diamond," she added.

Stevens also said the black diamond is likely from outer space.

"With the carbonado diamonds, we believe that they were formed through extraterrestrial origins, with meteorites colliding with the Earth and either forming chemical vapor disposition or indeed coming from the meteorites



(AP PHOTO/KAMRAN JEBREILI)

An employee of Sotheby's Dubai presents a 555.55 Carat Black Diamond "The Enigma" to be auctioned at Sotheby's Dubai gallery, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Monday, Jan. 17, 2022.

Cold case team shines new light on betrayal of Anne Frank

AMSTERDAM (AP)—A cold case team that combed through evidence for five years in a bid to unravel one of World War II's enduring mysteries has reached what it calls the "most likely scenario" of who betrayed Jewish teenage diarist Anne Frank and her family.

Their answer, outlined in a new book called "The Betrayal of Anne Frank A Cold Case Investigation," by Canadian academic and author Rosemary Sullivan, is that it could have been a prominent Jewish notary called Arnold van den Bergh, who disclosed the secret annex hiding place of the Frank family to German occupiers to save his own family from deportation and murder in Nazi concentration camps.

"We have investigated over 30 suspects in 20 different scenarios, leaving one scenario we like to refer to as the most likely scenario," said film maker Thijs Bayens, who had the idea to put together the cold case team, that was led by retired FBI agent

Vincent Pankoke, to forensically examine the evidence.

Bayens was quick to add that, "we don't have 100% certainty."

"There is no smoking gun because betrayal is circumstantial," Bayens told The Associated Press on Monday.

The Franks and four other Jews hid in the annex, reached by a secret staircase hidden behind a bookcase, from July 1942 until they were discovered in August 1944 and deported to concentration camps.

Only Anne's father, Otto Frank, survived the war. Anne and her sister died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Anne was 15.

The diary Anne wrote while in hiding was published after the war and became a symbol of hope and resilience that has been translated into dozens of languages and read by millions.

But the identity of the person who gave away the location of their hiding place has always remained a mystery, despite previous investigations.

Pharrell Williams calls for economic equity during MLK event

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (AP)—Singer and music producer Pharrell Williams is challenging corporate America to "do more" by supporting entrepreneurs of color and adopting economic equity measures.

The Virginian-Pilot reports that in remarks Monday during the Urban League of

themselves," she said.

Black diamonds, also known as carbonado, are ex-

tremely rare, and are found naturally only in Brazil and Central Africa. The cosmic

origin theory is based on their carbon isotopes and high hydrogen content.

Hampton Roads' annual Martin Luther King Jr. awards program, Williams said big businesses need to invest in people of color and noted that some of them already are.

"Not all businesses," Williams added. "The smart ones—the ones that will be here in 50 years."

Williams singled out the Jap-

anese financial and venture capital group SoftBank. He said the group was investing in founders of color, who could then create generational wealth and change their cities for the better.

Williams, who was born in Virginia Beach, also urged businesses and philanthropists to support the Urban League

and thanked the local chapter for their work in financial wellness, health and housing.

The event, which could not be held in person because of COVID-19, was livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube. Several local leaders were honored for representing King's legacy of social justice.

Colombian author García Márquez had secret Mexican daughter

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)—For decades renowned Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez kept the public from knowing about an intimate aspect of his life: He had a daughter with a Mexican writer, with whom he had an extramarital affair in the early 1990s.

The closely guarded secret was published by Colombian newspaper El Universal on Sunday and confirmed to the Associated Press by two relatives of the Nobel Prize-winning author, who is famous

for novels like One Hundred Years of Solitude and Love in the Time of Cholera.

García Márquez died in Mexico City in 2014, where thousands of his readers lined up to see his casket in a concert

hall. He was married for more than five decades to Mercedes Barcha and the couple had two children named Rodrigo and Gonzalo. They lived in Mexico City for much of their lives.

El Universal said that in



Marquez

the early 1990s García Márquez had a daughter with Susana Cato, a writer and journalist who worked with García Márquez on two movie scripts and who also interviewed him for a 1996 magazine story. Cato and García Márquez named their daughter Indira. She is now in her early 30s and uses her mother's surname.

Shani García Márquez, one of the writer's nieces, told the

AP that she had known for years about her cousin Indira, but had not mentioned her to the media because her parents always asked her to be discrete about her uncle's personal life.

Gabriel Eligio Torres García, who is also a nephew of the Colombian writer, said he has been in touch with Indira Cato through social media, though he has never met her in person.

"My cousins Rodrigo and Gonzalo told me about her casually during a reunion," he said.

Fiance's lady friends pose big problem for his intended

DEAR ABBY: My fiance, "Peter," has a number of female friends I'm not comfortable with, primarily because they are women he "had" interest in before we started dating. He says he has told them he's taken now and they can't be more than friends, but I don't think they got the message. He recently told me one of them told him a guy had proposed to her but she's delaying accepting in case Peter becomes available. This is the second time something like this has happened.

I believe it's because of the way he relates to these girls. I mean, if he has really made clear in words and actions that he's not interested in them romantically, they wouldn't base their life decisions on the hope that they may still have a chance with him.

Peter may tell me these things because he wants me to know lots of women are willing to have him. But I'm confused at this point about whether he's truly committed to me. Could it be he just likes "talking" to women even though it leads them on? And is this behavior healthy for a future marriage?

SECOND THOUGHTS

DEAR SECOND THOUGHTS: You are asking intelligent questions. Unfortunately, not knowing your fiance, I can't answer them. I can, however, offer this: When couples become serious, they stop playing games. If your fiance thinks

that causing you to feel jealous or insecure at this point is constructive, he is making a mistake because it won't stop after the wedding. Peter appears to be immature, and that's a red flag. Premarital counseling may help to clear the air.

DEAR ABBY: I have been married for 28 years. I thought we were very happy for the first 25. The change came when our children all left home. We sold our large house, which I was more than willing to do. But the house we have moved into causes me a lot of anxiety because of the traffic noise. My husband is very forceful about his "right" to choose where we live. He has insisted that the next move is also his choice and has already purchased the land. He claims he has provided for others all these years, and now it's his turn to get what he wants.

Abby, I raised the children, I still have a job and I contribute to every aspect of home life. Although I love him with all my heart, I wonder if I'd be better off throwing in the towel. He refuses to go to counseling, but I have gone, to help with my anxiety. After three years in this new home, I don't see any sign he will change his ways. I have tried talking to him about choosing something different together and moving, but he won't do it. Help!

BACK UP AGAINST THE WALL

DEAR BACK: I can't change your husband's attitude

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

and, apparently, neither can you. I'm glad you have been seeing a therapist, because it's time to schedule more appointments. Your therapist will help you to decide whether you can continue living with someone who refuses to recognize your contributions to the marriage and who has such a controlling, authoritarian attitude.

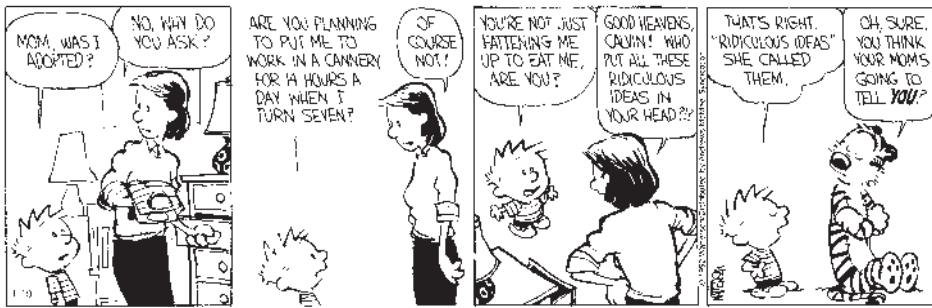
You have decisions to make that should not be taken lightly or decided while you are emotional. You deserve peace of mind and an equal voice about where you choose to live.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

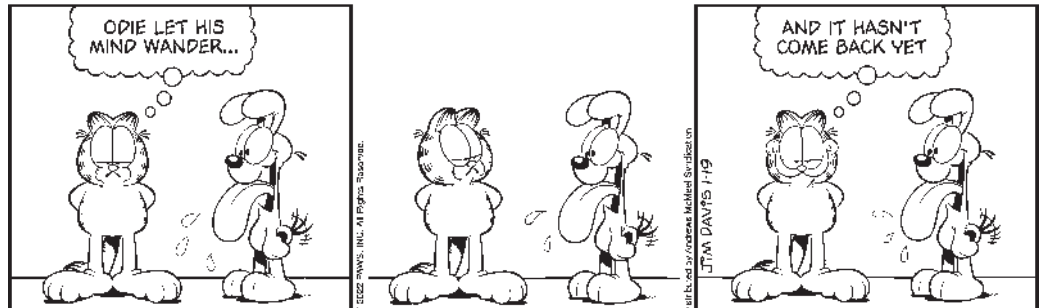
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



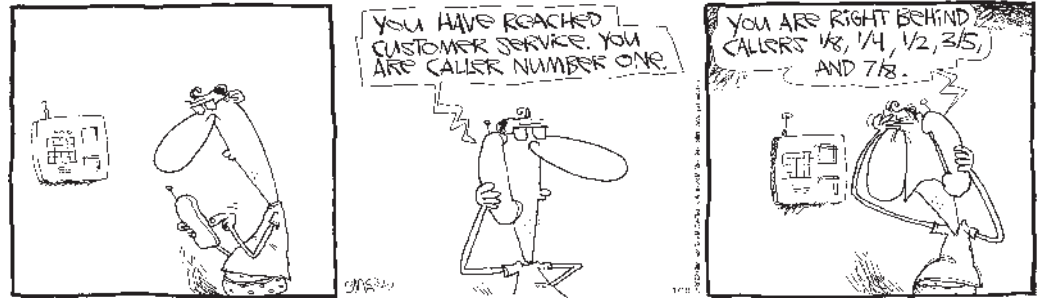
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		DOWN	
1 Siren	40 Salty expanse	1 Nov. honorees	23 Homer's cry
5 Cagers' gp.	41 Leave an impres-sion?	2 Bailiwick	24 "Right you —!"
8 Halt	43 Gear tooth	3 — -pedi	25 Multi-family dwelling
12 Eventful periods	45 Salsa ingredient	4 Sacred song	27 NBC weekend show
13 Cleric's tunic	47 Chopin pieces	5 Capital of Kenya	29 Complete
14 Jared of "House of Gucci"	51 Say it's so	6 Crunchy sandwich	30 Ecol. watch-dog
15 Persistence	52 Stresses	7 Void	32 Toronto's province
17 Privy to	54 Hindu royal	8 Small burgers	34 Empha-sizes
18 Tar	55 911 re-sponder	9 Curly strands	37 Play segment
19 Laid down the lawn	56 Tizzy	10 Okla-homa tribe	39 Pixels
21 Cattle call	57 Sax range	11 Frogs' hangout	42 "Monop-oly" buy
22 Crystal gazer	58 — Angeles	16 Hip	44 Appear-
23 Not "dis"	59 JFK postings	20 British ref. work	

Solution time: 23 mins.

E	L	A	N	U	S	S	S	A	G	E
G	I	B	E	R	O	C	E	S	P	O
G	H	E	E	N	B	A	I	T	A	N
S	E	T	O	A	K	C	H	E	S	S
L	I	N	B	I	S					
N	A	D	I	R	A	A	R	M	E	D
U	N	J	M	S	K	Y	F	A	S	E
B	O	H	E	M	I	A	D	E	T	E
G	O	B	C	A	N					
F	J	O	R	D	B	R	R	E	L	L
R	E	N	E	G	R	E	E	N	T	E
E	T	E	N	E	T	E	R	O	S	
F	O	N	U	T	E	W	E	S	T	

Yesterday's answer 1-19

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
18							19	20		
			21			22				
23	24	25		26		27		28		29
31			32		33		34		35	
36				37		38		39		40
			41		42		43		44	
45	46					47		48	49	50
51				52	53					
54				55				56		
57				58				59		

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Shawn Johnson, 30; Drea de Matteo, 50; Katey Sagal, 68; Dolly Parton, 76.

Happy Birthday: Work alongside others, and you will find unique ways to make the most of your time and attributes. Using your skills to harness your dreams will encourage changes that make your life better. Don't let pressure dictate what you do. Choose common sense, and you'll discover what's best for you and how to get what you want. Your numbers are 5, 17, 21, 29, 32, 38, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): A social event or online meeting will offer insight into something you want to pursue. An energetic attitude will help you convince others to back you. Plunge ahead with optimism and belief in yourself and what you have to offer. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Changing your mind too much will send the wrong message. Consider what you want, and act. You'll gain respect, and people will trust and believe in you. Follow your heart and do your own thing; doors will open. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Take time to make changes at home that will make your life easier. Steer clear of people who try to talk you into lavish options or ask you to take on something you cannot handle. Let your experience help you decipher what's good for you. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Distance yourself from situations that are damaging or extreme. Focus on learning and honing your skills. Applying something new you have to offer to a joy you already have will pay

off and position you for success. Romance is on the rise. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Gather information that helps you push forward with your plans. Refuse to let anyone talk you into something you don't comprehend or can't afford. Be careful not to partner with someone aggressive. If you lose control, it will cost you. ★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Pursue things that put a smile on your face. Mix business with pleasure or make a notable change to how you do things. Look for new ways to update how you use your skills, talents and knowledge to get ahead. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You'll accomplish your goal if you stick to basics and remain on course. Jumping from one thing to another will be your downfall. Reacquaint yourself with your original plan, and refuse to let anyone sidetrack you into doing things differently. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): An emotional situation will result in uncertainty. Don't argue with a friend, relative or colleague. Listen attentively, then go about your business. Do what works for you, regardless of what others do or say. A physical change will improve your life. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't make snap decisions regarding your finances. Joint ventures or shared expenses will cause uncertainty that can turn into a loss. Proceed by yourself. Taking control of money matters is in your best interest. ★★★★★

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

										5
			1	9				3	2	
		5			2			4		
	2	9	3				4			
8				2			1			
	1	6	7				2		8	
	7		2				5		9	
		4			8		6		1	
							3	2		

Difficulty Level ★★★

1/19

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	7	5	9	4	1	3	6	8
9	8	3	2	7	6	4	5	1
4	1	6	3	5	8	7	2	9
7	6	1	8	9	5	2	3	4
3	2	4	6	1	7	8	9	5
5	9	8	4	3	2	1	7	6
6	3	9	7	8	4	5	1	2
1	4	7	5	2	9	6	8	3
8	5	2	1	6	3	9	4	7

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EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Speak from the heart, and you can resolve issues. Trust in your ability to get things done, and offer your services to those you know will be grateful and reciprocate. Romance is on the rise and will improve your living arrangements. ★★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Stretch your imagination, and you'll come up with splendid ideas that will benefit you as well as others. Refuse to let anyone interfere with your plans or mess with your emotions. Focus on what's possible, and finish what you start. ★★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Go over small details, and make adjustments that will tighten any questionable problems that may stand in your way. Expect someone to undermine you if given a chance. Call on people you trust to carry out your plans explicitly. ★★★



Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, innovative and energetic. You are progressive and accommodating.

☺: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☺☺: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☺☺☺: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☺☺☺☺: Aim high; start new projects. ☺☺☺☺☺: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

PLASTIC FLATWARE

Solution: 10 letters

E	K	B	H	E	A	V	Y	G	N	I	T	T	E	S
X	C	E	I	C	U	T	L	E	R	Y	D	K	I	E
C	A	N	N	R	R	Y	D	R	U	T	S	R	(F)	I
U	L	D	E	A	T	G	R	E	E	N	S	A	(O)	L
R	B	A	P	I	L	H	L	U	N	C	H	P	(R)	P
S	G	B	P	S	N	P	D	O	O	F	Y	(K)	P	
I	U	L	T	W	L	E	R	A	O	S	W	C	G	U
O	E	E	H	A	S	S	V	I	Y	R	A	N	L	S
N	S	I	C	S	I	A	E	N	A	P	I	I	L	E
S	T	E	E	L	E	G	O	P	O	P	B	C	O	R
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Booker scores 48 points in Suns' MLK Day win over Spurs



SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Devin Booker had a season-high 48 points and the Phoenix Suns dominated the fourth quarter to defeat the San Antonio Spurs 121-107 Monday night for their fourth straight victory.

Chris Paul added 15 points and 12 assists as Phoenix won its sixth straight on the road and fifth consecutive in San Antonio.

"It's the benefit of having Chris Paul," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "Chris can read the game. Chris, when he reads it, he'll just run certain sets that we have to get Book the ball in certain spots. When a guy is rolling like that, you just kind of let him have the ball and space the floor properly."

Spurs center Jakob Poeltl had 23 points and 14 rebounds, and Dejounte Murray added 18 points.

Phoenix arrived in San Antonio after a 135-108 victory in Detroit on Sunday. The Suns started sluggishly against the Spurs, but Booker scored 18 points in the opening quarter to keep the game close.

"I just respect (the Spurs) to the highest level," Booker said. "I understand the level that they compete at and especially the level that they play at here in San Antonio. I just wanted to be aggressive from the start."

Booker was 18 for 33 from the field and 5 for 13 on 3-pointers in eclipsing his previous high of 38 points, which he collected twice.

"Shoot, it's been like that for a while," Paul said of Booker's hot start. "I think it's probably because we've got a team that's so supportive and we enjoy seeing each other do well. So, when we he gets it going like that, we try to feed him and then we still make the right play. For us, it's all about ultimately winning the game."

Phoenix was without injured starter Deandre Ayton, but reserve center Bismack Biyombo responded with 17 points and 14 rebounds.

"We needed some rebounding," Williams said. "They were kicking our butt. Now Jalen (Smith) can rebound, but they had some guys down there that can move you around a little bit. I thought Bis would give us a bit more girth down with Poeltl and Jock Landale."

Cameron Johnson was also key, scoring four of his eight points in a crucial stretch midway through the final quarter.

Johnson had a steal, which led to a contested layup that gave Phoenix a 103-98 lead with 7:44 remaining. Johnson made two free throws a minute earlier to put the Suns up 99-98.

The Spurs had three turnovers in a two-minute span



Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker (1) shoots against the San Antonio Spurs during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Jan. 17, 2022, in San Antonio.

beginning with Johnson's steal as the Suns took command late.

Phoenix outscored San Antonio 34-16 in the fourth quarter.

"They're a very good team," Spurs forward Keldon Johnson said. "They were in the championship last year. We kind of shot ourselves in the foot a couple of times with some bad turnovers."

The Spurs had their regular starting lineup together for the first time since Dec. 23. A return to familiarity sparked a fast start, as San Antonio took a 28-20 lead with every starter scoring at least three points.

The Spurs starters all finished in double figures, accounting for 84 points.

Hawks 121, Bucks 114

In Atlanta, Trae Young scored 30 points for Atlanta Hawks, who trailed for much of the game before rallying for a win over Milwaukee, snapping a 10-game home losing streak.

Winning at State Farm Arena for the first time since Nov. 22, the Hawks avoided their longest stretch without a home victory since an 11-game skid near the end of the dismal 2004-05 season, when Atlanta finished 13-69.

Khris Middleton scored 34 points and Giannis Antetokounmpo had 27 for the Bucks.

The Hawks appeared headed for another home loss in the traditional game in Martin Luther King Jr.'s hometown on the national holiday honoring the civil rights leader, trailing by as many as 14 and finding themselves down 97-86 with about 9 minutes remaining.

Lakers 101, Jazz 95

In Los Angeles, LeBron James scored 25 points and Stanley Johnson had 10 of his 15 points in the fourth quarter to

lead the Lakers to a win over the Jazz.

Russell Westbrook added 15 points and the Lakers snapped a three-game losing streak, rebounding after an ugly 37-point loss to the Denver Nuggets two days earlier.

Mike Conley had 20 points and Rudy Gobert had a double-double with 19 points and 16 rebounds for the Jazz.

Johnson, who was just re-signed to another 10-day contract earlier in the day, scored six consecutive points in the fourth quarter. He tied the game at 83 with a 15-foot pull-up jumper. He scored a layup with a nice move around Rudy Gobert to give the Lakers a 89-87 lead.

Mavericks 104, Thunder 102

In Dallas, Luka Doncic had 20 points, 12 assists and 11 rebounds for his third triple-double in five games, and surging Dallas withstood a late run by Oklahoma City.

Dorian Finney-Smith added 17 points and 10 rebounds and Kristaps Porzingis had 13 points, eight rebounds and four blocks for the Mavericks, who have won three straight and nine of their last 10.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 34 points to lead the Thunder, who have dropped seven of their last eight games.

The Thunder cut a seven-point Dallas lead to two with 2.6 seconds to play and had the ball. Josh Giddey threw a cross-court inbound pass for Mike Muscala, but Tim Hardaway Jr. won the battle for the ball.

Heat 104, Raptors 99

In Miami, Tyler Herro scored 23 points, Jimmy Butler got a triple-double in the game's final moment and Miami held

off Toronto.

Bam Adebayo, in his first game back after missing six weeks following thumb surgery, scored 14 points and made a pair of free throws with 8.5 seconds remaining.

Butler finished with 19 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds—the last of those coming as time was expiring, when Fred VanVleet's 3-point try missed.

Gabe Vincent scored 15 points for Miami, which pulled into a virtual tie with Chicago for first in the Eastern Conference.

VanVleet finished with 22 points for Toronto, which got 23 from Chris Boucher and 18 points and 10 rebounds from Pascal Siakam.

Hornets 97, Knicks 87

In New York, Miles Bridges scored a career-high 38 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, leading the Charlotte Hornets to a 97-87 victory over the New York Knicks.

Terry Rozier added 22 points. He and Bridges combined to outscore the Knicks by themselves in the first half as Charlotte bounced back nicely from a loss to Orlando that ended its four-game winning streak. The Hornets played without LaMelo Ball.

Julius Randle and RJ Barrett each scored 18 points for the Knicks, who had their three-game winning streak snapped.

Grizzlies 119, Bulls 106

In Memphis, Tenn., Desmond Bane and Ja Morant scored 25 points each, and Memphis dominated short-handed Chicago.

Brandon Clarke added 15 points and seven rebounds in the main event of the 20th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration. The Grizzlies

have won 12 of their last 13.

DeMar DeRozan led the Bulls with 24 points and five assists, while Coby White finished with 16 points, six rebounds and five assists. Chicago lost its fourth straight.

Cavaliers 114, Nets 107

In Cleveland, Darius Garland strengthened his All-Star case with 22 points and 12 assists, leading Cleveland over Brooklyn.

Isaac Okoro added 15 points and Jarrett Allen had 14 and 10 rebounds for the Cavs, who won their fifth straight.

Kyrie Irving scored 27 points in his fourth game of the season and James Harden added 22 for Brooklyn, which was playing its first game since superstar Kevin Durant, the NBA's leading scorer, sprained his left knee. He's expected to be out several weeks.

Wizards 117, 76ers 98

In Washington, Kyle Kuzma had 15 points and 16 rebounds, and Bradley Beal added 13 points in his return from a three-game absence to lift Washington over Philadelphia.

Washington coach Wes Unseld Jr. missed a second straight game after entering health and safety protocols. Assistant Pat Delany, who coached the team Saturday, also entered the protocols, forcing assistant Joseph Blair to take over for this game.

Philadelphia's Joel Embiid scored 32 points, but he was on the receiving end of the game's biggest highlight when Kuzma dunked over him in the second quarter.

Celtics 104, Pelicans 92

In Boston, Jayson Tatum scored 27 points and Boston erased an 18-point first-half

deficit with a win over New Orleans.

Tatum scored 21 in the second half to help Boston rally for its fifth win in six games.

Dennis Schröder and Jaylen Brown each had 23 points, Al Horford scored 12 and Grant Williams 10 for Boston. Tatum and Brown each had eight rebounds and Schröder added nine assists with five boards.

New Orleans center Jonas Valanciūnas recorded his 30th double-double this season with 22 points and 14 rebounds. Herbert Jones had 16 points and Brandon Ingram had 15 points with 10 rebounds.

Trail Blazers 98, Magic 88

In Orlando, Fla., CJ McCollum scored 16 points in his first game back from a collapsed lung. Jusuf Nurkic added 21 points and a season-best 22 rebounds, and Portland beat Orlando.

McCollum missed 17 games over six weeks after being injured Dec. 4. The ninth-year pro started Monday but played on a minutes restriction. He made 7 of 13 shots and 2 of 4 3-pointers in 28 minutes.

Portland beat the Magic for a 10th straight time dating to Jan. 13, 2017.

Ben McLemore added 14 points and four 3-pointers for the Blazers. Nurkic registered his team-best 18th double-double and finished one rebound shy of tying a career high.

Orlando never led after scoring the game's first basket and fell to 0-20 when failing to score 100 points. Franz Wagner and Mortiz Wagner each had 14 points.

Clippers 139, Pacers 133

In Los Angeles, Nicolas Batum scored a season-high 32 points, Reggie Jackson added 26 points and Los Angeles beat Indiana in a matchup of sub-.500 teams.

Marcus Morris had 21 points for the Clippers, who snapped a two-game skid with their highest-scoring game of the season. Batum and Jackson combined to score 33 of their team's 35 points in the fourth.

Caris LeVert had 26 points and nine rebounds before fouling out with 28 seconds to play and the Pacers down by five. Chris Duarte added 24 points, seven rebounds and six assists as seven Pacers scored in double figures. They've lost four in a row and 10 of 11.

The Pacers got within three with 30 seconds left on LeVert's basket after trailing by 13 earlier in the fourth. But Jackson scored the Clippers' final seven points to close out the win.

Analysis: Dak Prescott hands it to all the wrong people

By ARNIE STAPLETON
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER



Dak Prescott kept handing it to all the wrong people.

He should have delivered the football to umpire Ramon George instead of to his center Tyler Biadasz before time ran out on Dallas' season, leaving Cowboys fans ruminating the quarterback draw that was called with no timeouts and just 14 seconds left.

While Prescott and Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy were busy blaming the officiating for the botched finish that sealed the Cowboys' 23-17 wild card playoff loss to the San Francisco 49ers, Prescott praised fans for throwing trash at officials as they skittered off the field.

At first, Prescott eloquently condemned the fans' boorish behavior but it soon became clear he misunderstood the question and thought fans were hurling rubbish at his dejected teammates.

"No, I didn't see that. That's sad," Prescott said. "... You're talking about men that come out each and every day of their lives and give everything to this sport, give everything to this game of football. ... And for people to react that way when you're supposed to be a supporter and be with us through thick and thin, that's tough."

Informed it was the officials that fans were pelting with beer cups and nacho cheese sauce, Prescott did a 180 and retorted, "Credit to them, then."

With those haunting words, Prescott delivered the epitaph for the ugly end to Dallas' otherwise stellar season, and Jerry Jones was left to lament a 26th consecutive season



Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott speaks during a news conference following an NFL wild-card playoff football game against the San Francisco 49ers in Arlington, Texas, Sunday, Jan. 16, 2022.

without so much as a trip to the conference championship much less another Super Bowl appearance.

The NFL, by the way, said the officials got it right.

Referee Alex Kemp said the umpire did his job correctly as the final seconds ticked off the clock. He said George trailed the play by the proper length so he could view any possible infractions during the play and he said George properly spotted the ball after bumping into Prescott and Biadasz, causing a brief delay before the hike-and-spike that came a tick after the clock hit all zeroes.

Before that, Prescott was

brilliant in quickly moving the Cowboys downfield.

Dallas got the ball at its 20 with 32 seconds and no timeouts remaining. Prescott completed three consecutive passes, with the receivers getting out of bounds each time, and there were 14 seconds left when he ran 17 yards to the 49ers 24, then handed the ball to his center and lined up for the spike so he could get one shot at a game-winning touchdown toss.

You'd think a \$40-million-a-year quarterback would know what every NFL fan does: the umpire has to spot the ball before it can be

snapped again.

McCarthy defended the quarterback draw as the proper call in that situation even though it risked the very outcome that transpired. The 49ers had three down linemen and were defending the sideline, so the middle of the field was wide open.

"It's the right decision," McCarthy said. "We shouldn't have any problem getting the ball spiked."

ESPN analyst Jeff Saturday, who played center in the NFL for 14 seasons, said Prescott goofed by not sliding down sooner and by not looking to hand the ball to

the umpire.

"Dak has to understand you really want to go down at 10 seconds. So, he ran a second or two too long," Saturday said. "The other most important part: keep the ball in your hand. You are going to hand the football to the referee, so none of the rest of this stuff makes any difference because when you hand it to him, the offensive line will be looking back, understanding he's going to get through to spot the ball and you can spike it."

"There was enough time when he went down, if he holds the ball in his hand, doesn't give it to the center,"

Saturday said. "And here's the biggest thing: usually when you're running these 2-minute situations, it's between a receiver, a tight end or a running back and they literally are taught to go run the ball to the official. Don't throw it because they might drop it. Hand it to him on the way to the hash that the ball is going to be spotted."

Prescott was standing at the hashmark.

"All he has to do is hand the ball to the referee who is going to run to him to him to get it, secure it and put it down," Saturday said.

There were 5 seconds left when the umpire got to the line of scrimmage and had to work his way past Prescott and Biadasz to get to the ball that the center had placed on the turf.

These sorts of things are practiced on a weekly basis.

"The referee has to make his way through because the ball can't be placed until he touches it," Saturday said. "The center can't place it. The quarterback can't place it. So, it's uber-frustrating for all the Cowboys fans, but the reality is when you practice this week in and week out you have either referees on the field or an equipment manager who's going to take it and spot it."

Dallas offensive coordinator Kellen Moore, the architect of the NFL's highest-scoring offense, now has a calendar cleared to schedule all those interviews for head coaching jobs. He'll surely be asked about that last play when he talks to the Broncos, Jaguars, Dolphins and Vikings about their vacancies.

The Cowboys can book their trips to Cancun now while mourning the wild finish that will live in 49ers-Cowboys playoff lore like "The Catch" by Dwight Clark and Roger Staubach's frenetic fourth quarter rally that earned him the nickname "Captain Comeback."

"Dawdling Dak" might come to define this installment, one that drew immediate derision across social media and which Peyton Manning even alluded to Monday night during the Rams-Cardinals wild card game.

When the Rams defenders didn't immediately touch a Cardinals receiver after a diving catch, Eli Manning suggested they were waiting for the receiver to pop up so they try punching the ball out for an "easy turnover."

"I'm old school," Peyton Manning replied. "Just touch the guy down, right? Just hand the ball to the umpire in a 2-minute drill, right? Let's just do some of the basics the right way."

Murray's first playoff start a nightmare for Cardinals

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Kyler Murray's first NFL playoff start quickly turned into a nightmare.

The dynamic quarterback and his Arizona Cardinals teammates had about the worst start imaginable in Monday night's 34-11 loss to the Los Angeles Rams in the NFC wild-card round. By the time the Cardinals got their initial first down, they were trailing 21-0 midway through the second quarter.

"We didn't even make it a game," said Murray, who completed 19 of 34 passes for 137 yards and two interceptions. "I put a lot on my shoulders. To play the way I did was disappointing."

The Cardinals went three-and-out on their first four pos-

sessions, the first time that's happened in a playoff game in at least 10 seasons. They were outgained 180-40 in the first half and averaged just 1.5 yards per play, the second-worst average in a playoff game over the last 20 seasons.

Murray was under pressure from the start. He was sacked twice in the first half and was nearly brought down for a safety in the second quarter before throwing an ill-advised pass that was picked off by David Long for a 3-yard touchdown return to make it 21-0.

Murray was unable to find any success throwing downfield. He completed only one pass beyond 15 air yards on eight attempts, and 11 of his 34 attempts were passes behind the line of scrimmage.

"It just got out of hand early. You have to be able to run the ball on those guys. When you get into a passing game, they have three of the best pass rushers along with good players on the back end," Murray said.

The Cardinals came into the game 10th in the league in rushing, averaging 122 yards per game, but were held to a season-low 61 against the Rams. Murray had a season-low two rushing attempts and gained six yards.

"I just think overall as an offense we were just out of sync on a couple of things early that could have changed the game," coach Kliff Kingsbury said. "We never got in a rhythm and they made some big plays."

Arizona's only touchdown came midway through the third quarter when James Conner's 2-yard run capped a 12-play, 75-yard drive to get the Cardinals within 28-8. That drive also marked the first time Arizona crossed midfield.

"When you have negative play after negative play, it's just hard to get yourself out of that," wide receiver Christian Kirk said. "Once we did get on a roll in the second half we started doing some good things, but it was just too late."

The blowout loss continued a trend during Kingsbury's tenure — fast starts to the season before collapsing down the stretch. Arizona won its first seven games and was the NFL's last unbeaten team, making it one of the early fa-

vorites in the NFC.

At 10-2, the Cardinals had the NFC's best record and a two-game lead in the West before they lost four of their final five regular-season games and fell to the fifth seed.

Defensive lineman J.J. Watt was activated off injured reserve before the game after undergoing shoulder surgery in late October. Despite his return, the 11-year veteran couldn't hide his disappointment over the result.

"From what we were capable of doing and showed what we can do, there's no other way than to describe this as a failure," Watt said. "You get to enjoy the highs but you have to live with the lows. We started the season great and finished terrible."

IT&E Interscholastic Basketball League resumes

All is set for the return to action of the IT&E Interscholastic Basketball League, as the CNMI Public School System has approved the resumption of sports competitions among students.

The Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation, which manages the interscholastic basketball program, said the IT&E Interscholastic Basketball League will re-open in style, as there will be two division tournaments—boys and girls high school.

The girls high school games will kick off tomorrow, Jan. 19, with Saipan Southern High School taking on Mt. Carmel School at 5pm on the north court of the Marianas High School Gymnasium. On the southern end, it will be MHS versus Kagman

High School.

The boys high school will also start this week, with all seven participating teams having their season debut this Friday, Jan. 21. In the pair of matches on the north court, Saipan Southern will duel Kagman's varsity team at 5pm, while Saipan International School will square off against Marianas High



School in the 5:45pm tiff. Before battling MHS, the Geckos will first face Mt. Carmel School's junior varsity team on the south court for the 5pm match, while in the 5:45pm schedule, Da'ok Academy will debut against Mt. Carmel Varsity.

Games in the boys high school will also be played every Wednesday, but only one



In this 2020 file photo, Mt. Carmel School Varsity's Merrick Toves, left, beats Kagman High School Junior Varsity's Darren Pangelinan for the rebound during their game in the boys high school interscholastic league at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

match each on the north and south courts are scheduled, while four matches are slated every Friday. The girls high school matches are set for every Wednesday. The season will conclude with a double-elimination tournament for each division in March with Rota and Tinian allotted slots in the playoff round.

"The NMIBF is excited for the resumption of the IT&E Interscholastic Basketball League as this will allow our students access to the program and to showcase their skills again. We would also like to thank IT&E for its continued commitment despite the challenges we are facing after the league's successful kick-off via the girls middle school competition, and the CNMI PSS leadership for their support to the

program," NMIBF president James Lee.

The NMIBF head added that the federation will be working closely with the PSS Athletic Program director Nick Gross in following protocols at the MHS Gymnasium. Some safety measures that will be implemented at the venue include designating the west side bleachers for spectators only and requiring them to practice social distancing and wear a mask. Spectators are also required to use the main entrance of the gym (northwest main entrance), while the east side bleachers and south-west entrance are reserved for players, coaches, and officials. Both entrances will require logging in upon arrival and temperature checks. **(PR)**

Medvedev advances, Fernandez out in 1st round in Australia



MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—The Australian Open started well for second-seeded Daniil Medvedev, one of the biggest potential beneficiaries of Novak Djokovic's deportation.

Aiming to be the first man in the Open era to win his second major title on his next Grand Slam appearance, Medvedev had a 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (3) win over Henri Laaksonen on Tuesday in the first round at Melbourne Park.

Defending champion Djokovic was already back in Serbia, two days after losing his legal challenge to stay in Australia despite being unvaccinated against COVID-19, when Medvedev went onto Rod Laver Arena and raced through the first set in 26 minutes.

Nobody has dominated on that court like Djokovic, who was unbeaten in the nine finals he reached at the Australian Open. Medvedev was the most recent recipient of one of those beatings, losing last year's championship match.

But he avenged that with

his breakthrough major title at the U.S. Open, where his victory meant Djokovic's bid for a calendar-year Grand Slam finished one win short.

"I like pressure," he said. "Always want to do better than I did last year (but) it's not going to be easy."

That's something Leylah Fernandez has had to confront.

The 19-year-old Canadian lost 6-2, 6-4 to 133rd-ranked wild-card entry Maddison Inglis in her first Grand Slam match since her runner-up finish at the U.S. Open.

Fernandez made 30 unforced errors, dropped her serve three times and hit only eight winners on 1573 Arena against Inglis, who converted her third match point to complete her very first win

in the main draw of a major.

"Today was just not a good day. Too many mistakes," Fernandez said.

She lost in the first round at last year's Australian Open to then defending champion Sofia Kenin.

For Fernandez, the venue and the vibe were a long way from her run to the final at Flushing Meadows, where she lost to Emma Raducanu. Raducanu was scheduled to play later Tuesday against 2017 U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens.

The third-seeded Muguruza, meanwhile, kept a perfect streak intact when she won her first-round match at the Australian Open for the 10th straight time, beating No. 77-ranked Clara Burel 6-3, 6-4 to open play on Rod La-

ver Arena on Day 2.

A runner-up in Australia in 2020 to Kenin — who was a first-round loser on Monday — Muguruza said she's always extra cautious early in a big tournament.

"I am aware, I am aware," Muguruza said, laughing, when asked if she knew her Melbourne Park streak. "Very tricky. You're always nervous going out there on Rod Laver, which I love, and starting a Grand Slam campaign. I've always gone through the first round."

"Very happy the way I played and, of course, controlling the nerves." Third-seeded Muguruza will next play French veteran Alize Cornet, who beat Viktoriya Tomova 6-3, 6-3.

Sixth-seeded Anett Kon-

taveit, runner-up to Muguruza at least year's WTA Finals, had a 6-2, 6-3 win over Katerina Siniakova. Seventh-seeded Iga Swiatek, the 2020 French Open champion, opened with a 6-3, 6-0 win over 123rd-ranked British qualifier Harriet Dart.

Also advancing were No. 10 Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova and No. 14 Simona Halep, a former No. 1 and a two-time major winner who reached the 2018 final here at Melbourne Park.

No. 19 Elise Mertens beat Vera Zvonareva 6-4, 7-5, and former U.S. Open champion Sam Stosur rallied to beat Robin Anderson of the U.S. 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-3 to start her 20th—and last—Australian Open campaign.

Two-time Wimbledon

champion Petra Kvitova lost to Sorana Cirstea of Romania for the second straight year, this time 6-2, 6-2 in the first round.

"Yeah, I think that she likes my game, that she just is going for it," Kvitova, an Australian Open finalist three years ago, said. "I did have some health issues the whole month, as well, so it was tough to practice during home month."

"But the season is long, so I hope that it will turn around."

Earlier in the men's draw, No. 5 Andrey Rublev beat Gianluca Mager 6-3, 6-2, 6-2, No. 11 Jannik Sinner beat Joao Sousa 6-4, 7-5, 6-1, No. 13 Diego Schwartzman beat Filip Krajinovic 6-3, 6-4, 7-5 to advance along with No. 15 Roberto Bautista Agut and No. 27 Marin Cilic.

HYE

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off the win by being aggressive from the get-go.

"[I won by] attacking the ball and controlling the point," she said.

The Elliot-Chung finals was the only game in the women's open as there was no other entry in the division.

Elliot dedicated her win

in the women's open to her parents, Jeff Elliott and Aeja Park.

In the girls 16-and-under singles, Yebin Shin upset No. 1 seed Seiyul Hong in straight sets, 6-3, 6-2.

The No. 3 seed started her campaign with a 6-0, 6-0 shutout of Lucy Li. She then advanced to the finals with a 6-1, 6-1 conquest of No. 2 seed Seohee Lee.

Hong got a bye in the opening round before punching her finals ticket with a protracted 5-7, 7-6, 10-7 win over Olivia Hwang.

Top seed Irin Chung won the girls 14-and-under after fashioning out a 6-3, 6-3 triumph over No. 3 seed Hoo Wang.

Chung only had to beat Lina Tsukagoshi to earn a finals slot, 4-2, 4-2, after get-

ting a bye in the first round.

In contrast, Hwang opened with a 6-1, 6-0 win over Jeongbin Park before out-dueling second seed Hannah Chae in the semis, 4-2, 4-1.

Results of the mixed doubles will be reported in tomorrow's issue of *Saipan Tribune*.

The 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis was held as a fundraiser for Saipan In-

ternational School's Student Council and is sanctioned by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association.

The sponsors of the event are the following: Mango Six Café, Sura Restaurant, Café 670, All Star Sporting Goods and Boarderline, Joeten Superstore, Plumeria Steakhouse, Java Joe's, Hyatt Regency Saipan, and Summer Snow Café.

BOLA

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The above schedule is just the first leg of Bola, as the NMIBF is planning to visit more villages, including Tinian and Rota.

"Bola" will be held in partnership with the Office of the Governor, the Saipan Mayor's Office, the Office of Youth Affairs, the Division of Youth Services, the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, and DCCA's Sports and Recreation. **(PR)**

NMA

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shall Islands, based on recommendations from the National Olympic Committee and the Games Organizing Committee, approved postponing the Micro Games to 2023. It was originally set from July 25 to Aug. 5, 2022. No dates have been set for the 2023 quadrennial event.

Marianas Cup

Tebuteb, meanwhile, held off commenting on NMSA president Jerry Tan's call for the establishment of an annual CNMI-Guam competition for all sports patterned after the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's Marianas Cup.

"Until such time that NMSA comes out officially will NMA have thoughts on the 'suggesting' NMA, however, contin-

ues to assert our existing relationship with our counterparts in Guam and other athletics federation regions in effectuating a so-called 'Marianas Cup.' In short, we have been and continue to be doing athletics activities with our Guam counterparts," the former congressman said.

Mini Games

The NMA president also provided an update on their ath-

letes' training for the Pacific Mini Games the CNMI will be hosting for the first time ever this year.

"Our coaches and athletes continue to be creative and train around our community health situations. Unlike other sports disciplines, athletics' selection process revolves around individual performances as it moves toward the eventual competition timelines," he said.

Tebuteb, however, is worried that the impending closure of the Oleai track and field facility may affect their training schedule of their national athletics pool.

"NMA is concerned with the potential closure of the only proper athletics training facility we have."

The athletics competition of the Mini Games will have the third most number of participants with 216.



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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Hye Jin beats Serin for women's open title

By MARK RABAGO
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Hye Jin Elliot defeated Serin Chung in three sets to win the women's open of the 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament last Sunday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

It's the third time in the last three months that the close friends and SIS schoolmates played each other in the finals.

Elliot topped Chung in the boys 16-and-under division of the 2021 TanHoldings Tennis Classic, 6-3, 2-5, 10-4. Chung, however, returned the favor a week later when she won the women's open of the same tournament, 0-6, 6-4, 10-7.

So, it was no big surprise that the two top junior women's tennis players needed another super tiebreaker to determine the champion of their duel last Sunday with the top seeded Elliot ultimately prevailing against the No. 2

seeded Chung in a score of 6-4, 5-7, 10-4.

The 16-year-old junior admitted at this stage, she and Chung already know each other's games very well and it all goes down to execution.

"We know each other's game because we have been playing no other opponent in tournaments. But I think we both played very well and we had fun playing against each other," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Chung echoed the same sentiment. "Yeah, we always enjoy playing each other."

Elliot shared that she pulled

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Hye Jin Elliot, left, and Serin Chung in action in the finals of the women's open of the 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament last Sunday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.



MARK RABAGO

NMA supports Micro Games postponement



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Northern Marianas Athletics president Ramon Tebuteb, right, poses with CNMI Hall of Famer and former NMA president Dr. Kurt Barnes during a break in a track and field meet last June at the Oleai Sports Complex.

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Northern Marianas Athletics has no problems with the postponement of the 2022 Micronesian Games in the Marshall Islands to 2023.

NMA president Ramon Tebuteb said since the Pacific Mini Games in the CNMI was postponed from 2021 to 2022, it's more than justified that the Marshall Islands

follow suit and also put off the Micro Games for a year.

"As you are aware, an alignment of other significant sports events and other more influencing and very important issues were taken into account. Health and safety of all participants were primary. NMA supports these," he said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Last November, the Mar-

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Bola' kicks off at Kobler; safety protocols in place

The Northern Marianas Islands Basketball Federation will open the Mini Basketball Village Outreach Program dubbed as "Bola" this Saturday at the Koblerville Basketball Court with the safety of the participants as its top priority.

"The NMIBF is excited to finally bring 'Bola' to our villages, starting off at Koblerville. And we would like to assure parents and guardians of our participating players that

this event will be conducted with the safety of your children in our mind," NMIBF president James Lee said.

To minimize contact and observe safe distance, "Bola" sessions will be run by stations. There will be four stations spread out at the Koblerville court. Each participant will also have their own basketballs to work with during drills. Program co-leaders Irish Pagarao and Marlene

Lumabi will teach participants basic drills on dribbling, passing, shooting, and footwork. NMI National Team Program players and NMIBF officials will also be there to assist in the session that will run from 4pm to 6pm.

There will be temperature checks at the site and wearing of masks will be required. Interested participants are encouraged to come at the venue at least 15

minutes before the kick-off to register. Those who have already secured registration and waiver forms must bring the filled-out copy at the designated court. Registration forms are available at the Koblerville Youth Center and can be also obtained by emailing nmibf.bola@gmail.com or visiting NMIBF's Facebook page NMIBBasketballFederation.

The NMIBF will provide bottled water for players, but they are still encouraged to bring extra hydration and must wear appropriate clothing and shoes for their safety and convenience.

"Bola," which has been postponed a couple of times due to the COVID-19 cases situation on island, is NMIBF's

take on FIBA's Basketball For Good program. Through the support of FIBA Oceania and FIBA Foundation, the NMIBF will be able to provide a free program for boys and girls in the 12-and-under age group and teach them skills on and off the court.

The NMIBF took the approach of bringing "Bola" to the heart of the community to empower villages and their leaders in running

similar programs and instilling village pride through sports and community involvement.

From the Koblerville Basketball Court, "Bola" will move to the Garapan Basketball Court for the Jan. 29 session. Other "Bola" stops include the Civic Center Basketball Court on Feb. 5; Kagman Community Center Court on Feb. 12; Chinatown Basketball Court on Feb. 19; San Vicente Community Center basketball court on Feb. 28; and As Matuis Basketball Court on March 5. All sessions will run from 4pm to 6pm and players are encouraged to sign up for the sessions at their respective village or the closes one.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A young player works on his dribbling skills during a clinic Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation helped facilitate in the summer last year. This year, the NMIBF will kick off its Mini Basketball Village Outreach Program dubbed as "Bola" this Saturday at the Koblerville Basketball Court.